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*A Garden in the
Suburbs*
Mrs. Leslie Williams

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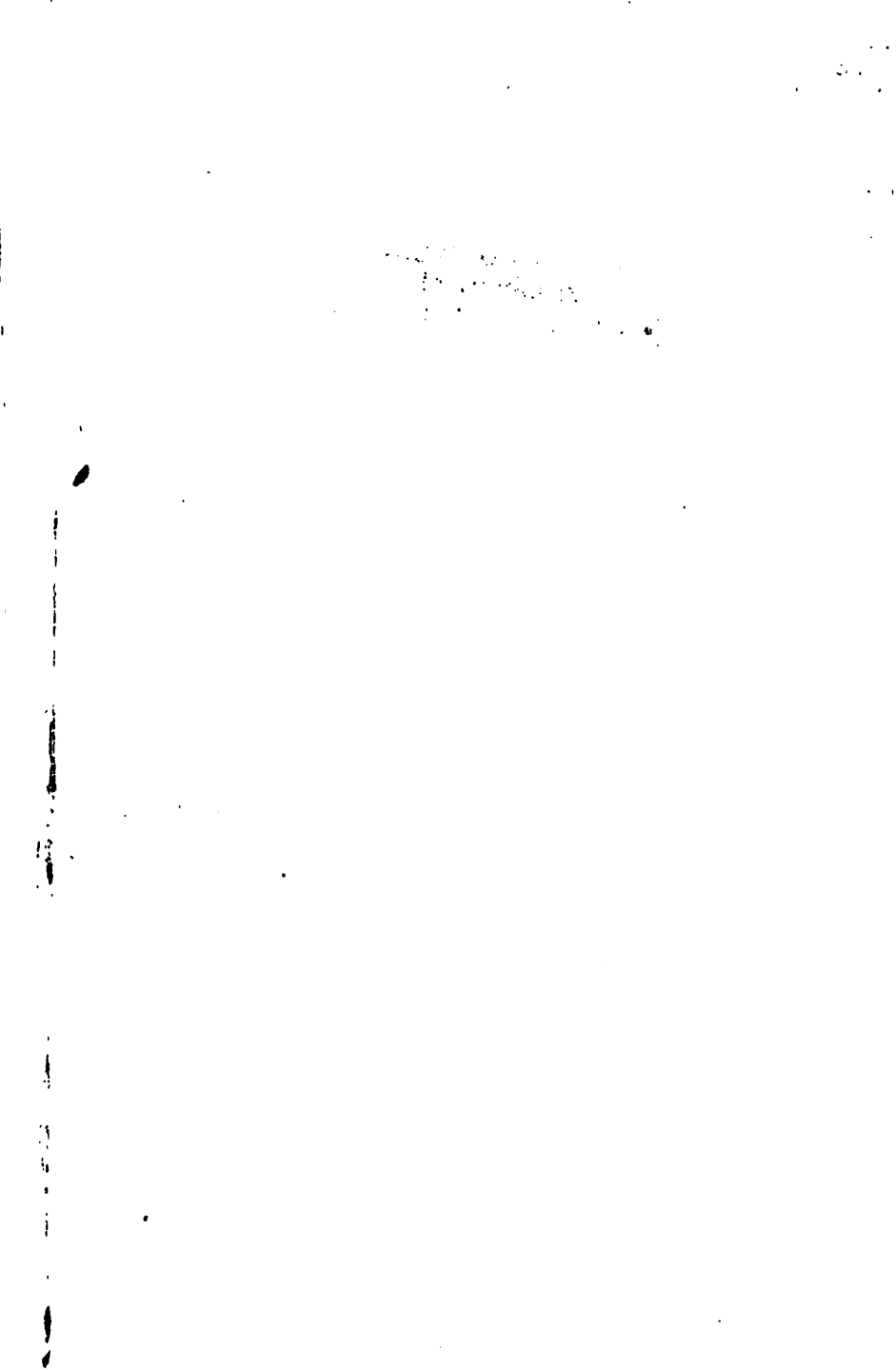
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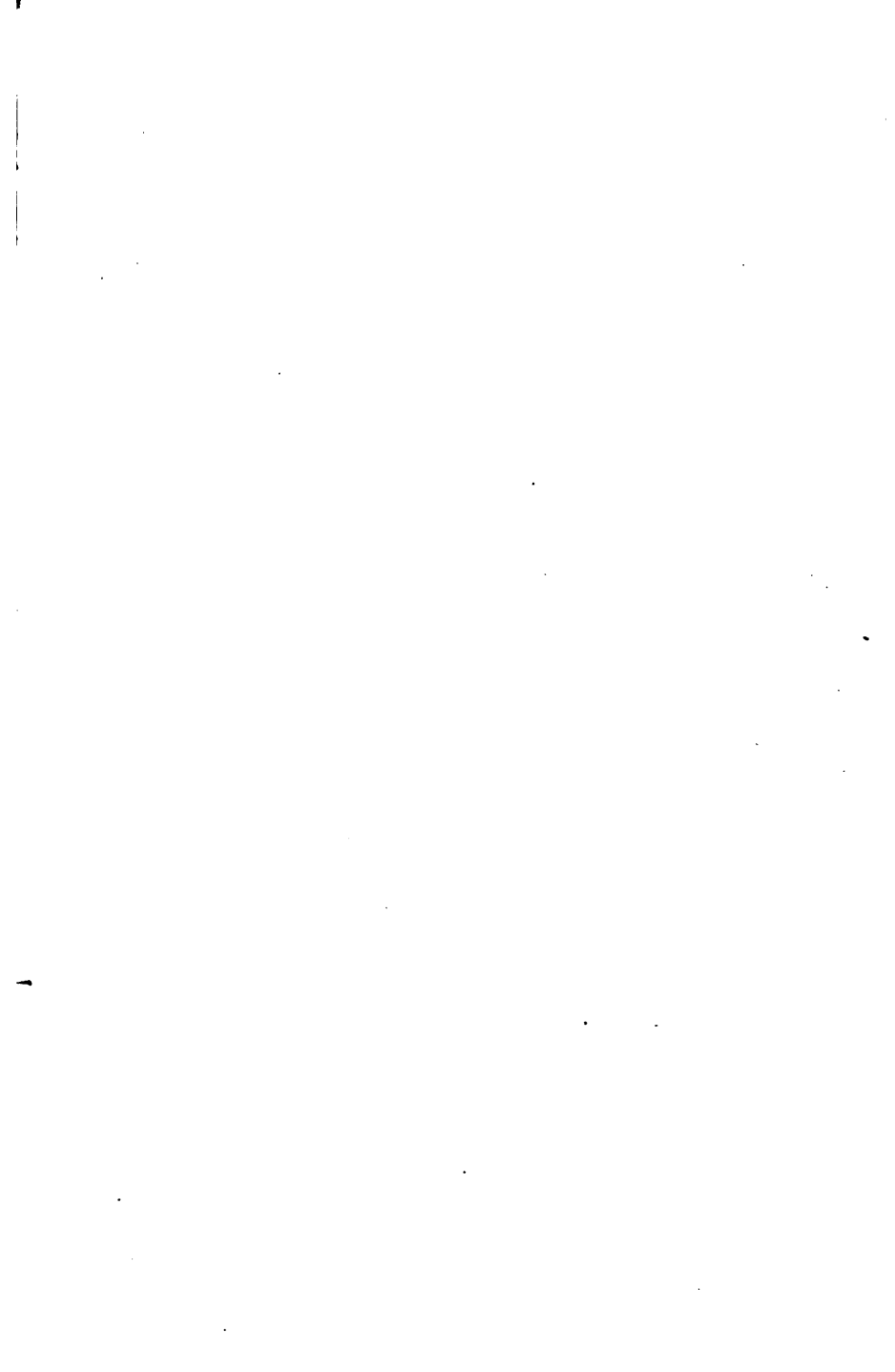
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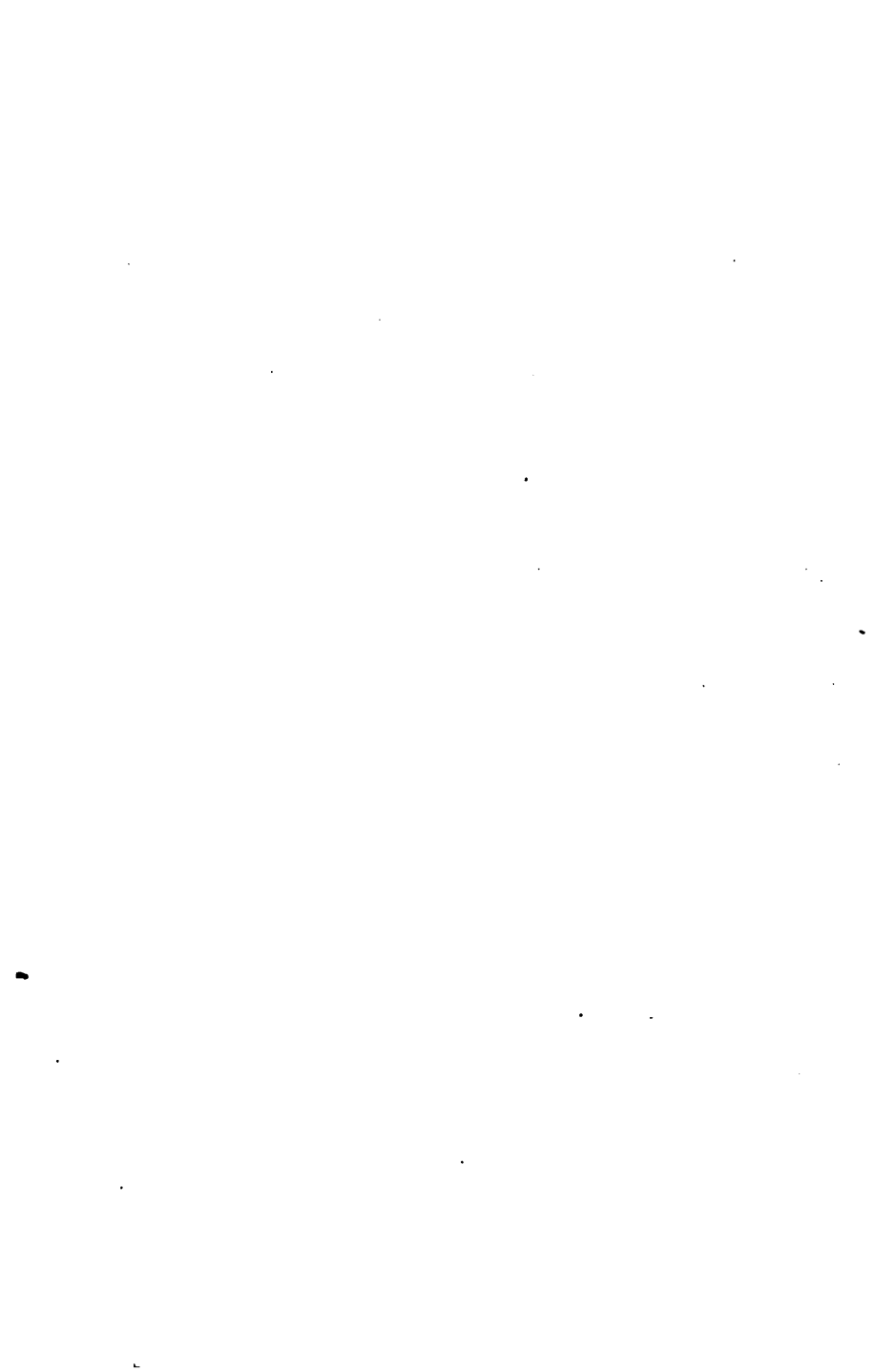
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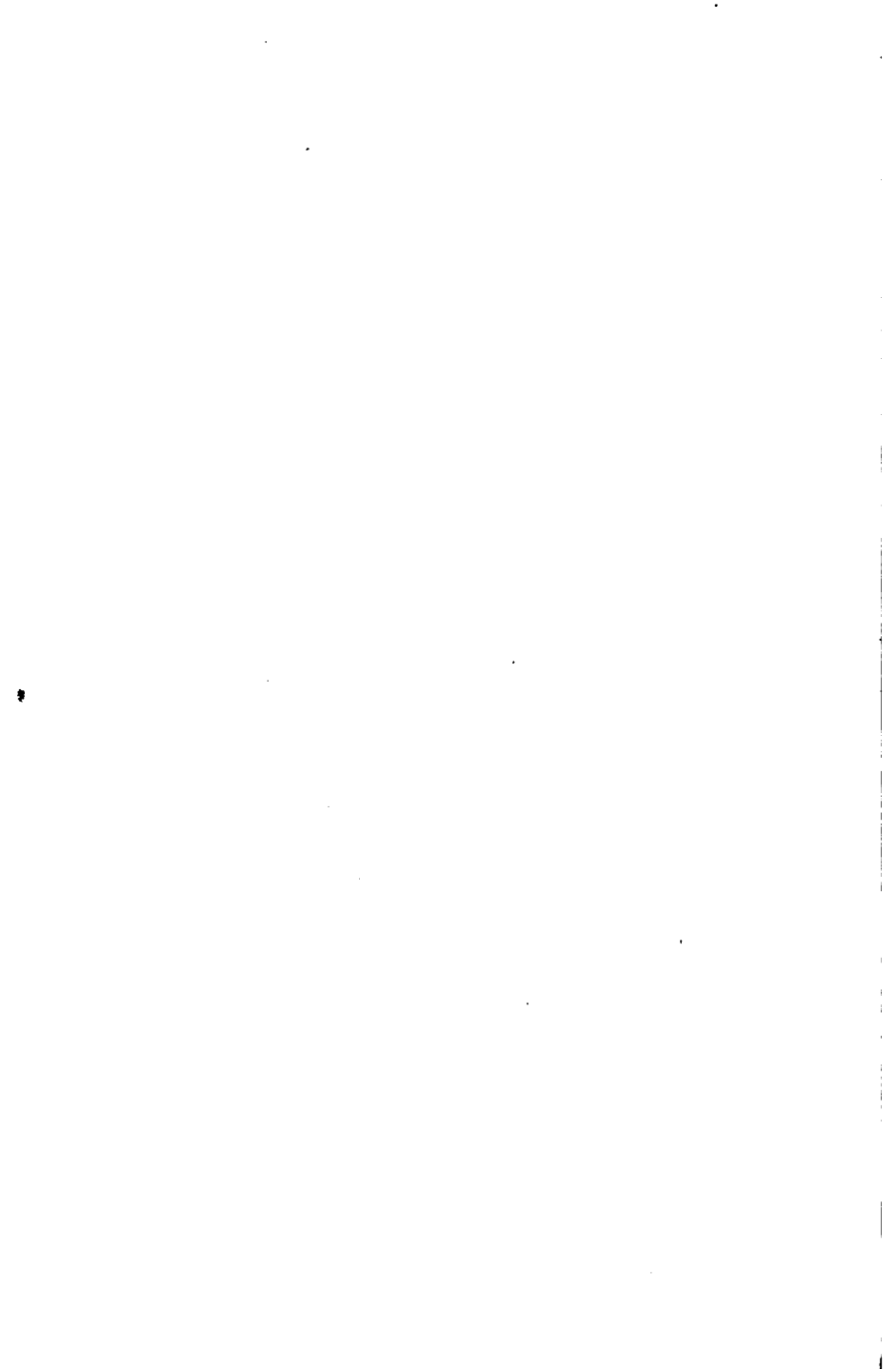




**A GARDEN IN
THE SUBURBS**



A GARDEN IN
THE SUBURBS







THE ROSEBUD—IN ITS FIRST YEAR

©

A GARDEN IN THE SUBURBS

BY -

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS

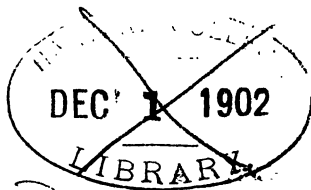
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“ἀτὰρ συ μοί ἐσσι πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ
ἡδὲ κασίγνητος, σὺ δέ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης.”

Il. vi. 429.

"DID YOU KNOW THAT THE WORD PARADEISOS MEANS A GARDEN?"
—"STORY OF MY LIFE," A. J. C. HARE

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PREFACE

THIS little book, the outcome of some happy years of garden work under difficulties many and manifold, is primarily indited for the benefit, or perhaps I should rather say, for the amusement, of those whose ambitions out-run their opportunities, and whose well-beloved gardens are all too straitly bounded within suburban walls. This being so, I need offer no apology for what I fully recognise—the comparative smallness and insignificance of its scope. For permission to reprint matter contributed to its pages I have to thank the kindness and courtesy of the proprietor of “The Garden,” and I also owe acknowledgment in this respect to the “Ladies’ Field” and “Gardening Illustrated.”

POT-POURRI

*"Roses' scent was never meant
To steal away so soon;
Then lay it here upon the bier
Of unforgotten June.*

*"In a year when love was near
Blushing the roses bloomed,
And on the day they dropt away
Dead June with them was tombed.*

*"Roses' scent was never meant
To breathe about the dead.
When Love lay dying came one crying
'Lilies for his bed.'"*



FIELDS

PUBLIC PATH

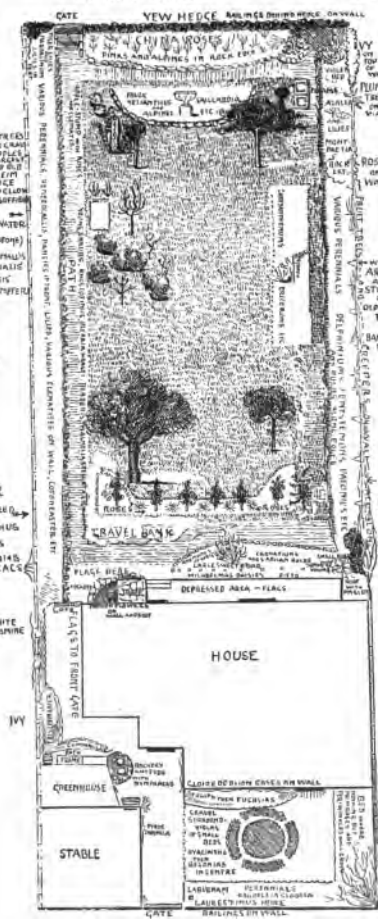


A
VACANT
GARDEN
HERE
FULL OF
TREES.

THE
GRAVEL BANK
AND ROCKERY COVERED
WITH ALPINE DIANTHUS
AND SUCH PLANTS AS
AUBRIETIAS & LILAC

NEXT
DOOR.

A ROUGH PLAN
OF THE
OBLONG
GARDEN
WHICH IS IN SIZE
ABOUT 100' X 50'



PLAN—THE REAL GARDEN

I

JANUARY

ONE of those delectable gardens, enclosing a large acreage, where knowledge and wealth have coaxed Nature into every manifestation of beauty of which she is capable, is my own little private dream of a heavenly mansion. Meanwhile I am doing the best I can with an oblong close to a country town! Fortunately, it is on a hill, and out of the way of smoke and dust, having the inestimable advantage of being quite away from a road; still, it is painfully enclosed as to its two long sides with walls of like oblongs belonging to the next-door houses. And in most of these houses there are cats, which seem to prefer a garden where the owner is enthusiastic to one where, as on my left side, the house is empty and the garden in the perfunctory charge of the jobbing gardener who lives opposite. Only this morning, as I went round my oblong, I found a dear pussy had drawn diagrams all through and over

A Garden in the Suburbs

a group of Cottage Maid Tulips, which are planted in front of the bit of rockery running up to the sloping roof of a little tool-house in the sunny right-hand corner against the house. On this rockery, which is made in little terraces and of crumbly yellow sandstone, I have planted all the encrusted Saxifrages I could get hold of in the neighbourhood, and they seem very happy. I was tempted by some delightful lists of many varieties of both encrusted and mossy Saxifrages and Sempervivums, intending to plant the mossy ones in another little rockery I have in partial shade. But luckily I consulted a Scotch friend who is clever in all ways horticultural, though chiefly interested in Cacti. "Down here in the west," he said, "some of the most beautiful Saxifrages which succeed very well up north disappear the first winter. They don't mind frost, or the snow, which in their native haunts covers them up all through the winter, but they can't stand our mild, damp, muggy winters." After this I confined my ambitions to the few he had tried and found willing, and I am glad to say one of them was the Spider-web Sempervivum, which is spreading its little rosettes bravely, but at this time of the

January

year is webless. Some big tufts of *Saxifraga hypnoides*, which seems to be very cheap, judging by the mass of it I got for sixpence, I pulled into little bits in October, and dibbled out over a clump of *Watsonias*, which in this mild climate will do very well in the border all winter if they have a little protection of some kind. Down each side of my oblong I have a wide border, shady one side and sunny the other ; along each of these is a gravel path after the most approved plan of the builder, who lays out the garden with as little thought as possible, and in the middle is a rather nice long lawn with an Apple tree at each corner. I bless the planter of these four trees. They are always charming, whether loaded with bloom or gay with red and green Apples, or leafless. One is a hoary veteran, gnarled and lichened in the most picturesque way, who in spite of age produced a vast crop of excellent Blenheim Oranges last year, while another, his opposite neighbour, is a cobby little Codlin just old enough to bear plentifully. The two at the other end are very old and not profitable. One, I fancy, is a Tom Putt, and bears very lovely bright red fruit, which was hard and wormy last year ; the other only looked pretty and

A Garden in the Suburbs

bore little but pink blossom. I put grease-bands round them in September, and on taking them off the other day, found them perfectly crusted with divers insects, which the robins, hedge-sparrows and tits, who abound here, ate up immediately off the bands on the ground. I shall put these bands back in June to trap the codlin moth and confiscate its eggs, but I am too fond of the beauty of silver lichen and green moss to smother the trunks and branches in powdered slaked lime or cover them with a wash of the same and paraffin, as I suppose I ought to do if I were a proper utility gardener. I have hung suet in the branches, and the tits of three sorts dart about and make our garden a *rendezvous*, while numbers of other birds, even a tree-creeper, who is so shy, delight in the trees, and seem to find endless employment in picking them over.

There is always something to do, even in an oblong, and the boy who helps me is kept hard at work rolling the lawn and paths whenever the weather is the least fine. To-day I have had a bit of the shady border dug out two feet deep, then the soil at the bottom of the excavation was loosened, and a little old hotbed manure worked in with some good loam ;

January

over this two feet of peat, loam and sand ; and when they arrive, a quantity of *Lilium pardalinum* will be planted here, with some Trimardeau Pansies, sown last August close by and pricked out in March, as carpeting. The border here gets a couple of hours' sun, from two to four, and I think these lovely tiger-like Lilies with their spotted yellow, green-tipped blooms, which remind one of that rather misnamed stove plant, *Gloriosa superba* (which is so much less glorious, being so much smaller than they), ought to do well. The real Tiger Lilies are of all the autumn flowers the most splendid.

Deep snow ! and very seasonable, too. Last year everything rushed out all through a beautiful warm February, and suffered terribly from six weeks of east wind a little later, with the result that my Roses were a miserable first crop. This year I see *Clematis Jackmani*, both *alba* and the blue *superba*, have fat green buds in their joints, all ready to burst and be nipped, for they were foolishly produced quite early in January. So has the *Moutan Pæony*, which grows in front of the *C. alba*. Of course it has had several

A Garden in the Suburbs

pinkish plump noses ready all through the late autumn and winter, but during the last week or two it has unfolded them a good deal. It is not planted in the best of situations, for it is in the sunny border, which gets the full benefit of his majesty from the earliest of his uprising, and all the books warn us against planting Pæonies where night-frozen buds and early leaves will be too quickly and fiercely thawed. There is the Lord Suffield Apple tree in the lawn close by, though, and I hope this will be some slight protection, though I feel myself as foolishly sanguine as the Clematis is premature. What a pity it always seems to cut down the summer and autumn-flowering Clematises to the regulation five or six eyes in the winter before they sprout! I confess I have not done it to mine, as although, when left unpruned, the growth retreats upwards to some extent, leaving a certain amount of bare stem below, some of the new shoots can always be tied down to cover the nudity, even supposing the plant does not see to this itself, as I find it usually does with a perfect mantle of wealth. I had Clematis montana planted last year against the half-shady wall where a group of Lilac bushes

January

grows in the next-door garden ; they are old and very tall, and have been kept strictly to their own side, so that the side next us presents a very suitable position for my montana to climb upon and wreath itself round the Lilac branches. Close by I put *Clematis flammula*, as I thought they might grow up together, and then our eyes would be blessed with sheets of starry white blooms both in spring and autumn. Although the *Clematis flammula* is only a baby, between three feet and four feet high, it bloomed most profusely not long after it was turned out of a pot into the ground in late September. It smelt most deliciously, and then I thought no more of it, until November—quite at the end of the month—I noticed it looking filmy and smoky, with a gleam of red ; it had covered itself with the same delightful grey-feathered seeds as the common Traveller's Joy, but more beautiful, because the seed itself among its plumes is crimson. There is no such country as this for Traveller's Joy ; it hangs in vast masses, and drapes all the dear untidy high hedges like the smoke of battle, and as it flourishes so exceedingly, so I hope may its near relations in my garden. This is a good month for planting them,

A Garden in the Suburbs

and I have ordered new plants of Princess of Wales, which is a most lovely deep mauve late bloomer, and the two doubles, respectively lilac and white, Countess of Lovelace and Duchess of Edinburgh, of the florida section. I have always failed with these, for in our damp winters and dry summers they *will* die off, apparently near or about the graft, but I cannot buy them on their own roots, though the Jackmannii section are so procurable. A friend of ours has a superb Countess all over the front of his house, and every year when I drive past and see it, I mentally devote another 1s. 6d. or 2s. 6d. for a specially large plant—to a fresh purchase and trial. One thing I have established—none of these tender kinds will grow here on arches. I am going to try them on the little shady recesses where the small buttresses are that support the walls of the oblong; if I put them in on the side where the sun cannot get at their lower stems when they are wet, but where the shoots can go over and get all they want of sunshine, perhaps I shall do better. The effect of these things by themselves on a wall is not quite satisfactory, so I am giving them a background of small-leaved Ivy, a kind of which I am ashamed to say I do not

January

know the name, but it has a pink and silver leaf, with a little faint green about the midrib, and is a *pernickety* grower in most places, though it seems happy here. The aurea spectabilis Ivy is beautiful over the side of a house near, but I am afraid the one I have planted on the half-shady wall as a background to the yard and a half of border devoted to *Iris germanica* will not show enough gold to deserve its name. The soil is too good, and nearly all the ivy's new leaves are green.

The snow has come at an annoying moment, for one thing—my plantation of pardalinum Lilies now in making. I have never seen them growing, for about here no one seems to go in for Lily culture, but a coloured picture of the Tiger Lily-shaped blooms, rather more slender and graceful, with the green-tipped petals, all spotted like a newt's stomach, fired me with desire of them, and I ordered a dozen, to receive which we have made a nook at the very far end of the shady border. A Laburnum tree, quite an infant, bends over a little here, but if it interferes I shall have it taken away. The angle is full of Ivy, and the wall at the back is covered with a white rambling Rose, which goes over the top to get sun. I

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had a hole dug two feet deep and about the same square. As the drainage seemed good, we put a little old hotbed manure and fibry loam at the bottom, and then filled in with peat and loam and just a sprinkle of sand. It is never very dry down here, and I have a wee plantation of Trilliums close by, which like the same kind of life as the Panther Lily, and the big old Apple tree will shade them. The pardaliums are to come from my favourite nurseryman, who will charge a little more than advertised prices and pick them out for me. He says that the Lily disease is now rampant among all the Japanese imported bulbs, and advises me to get auratums, etc., either home-grown or from Holland, where they are not troubled as yet. The English-grown auratums will sometimes grow perennially in the garden, whereas foreign bulbs seldom or never survive their first season, so it is well to be economical here by being extravagant to begin with.

II

FEBRUARY

I HAVE a lovely plan for next month, and the beginning of it must be arranged for at once. In the front of my garden—the portion that lies between the house and road, and is partly occupied by the stable, against which a tiny greenhouse is built as a lean-to—there is a patch of grass, which forms an illegitimate short cut to greenhouse, cold frame, and stable, and which is now a bare eyesore, the weakness of human nature taking the servants invariably and myself occasionally across it as a thoroughfare. It is a fairly sheltered spot and gets the afternoon sun, and I propose to make of it something quite out of the way for an oblong. Perhaps I am ridiculously ambitious, but I do not see why Mr Barr's¹ plan of growing *Nymphæas* in sunk tubs should not be carried out—in a small way—here. There is only room for two tubs, but better two than none. An oil

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barrel is ordered, and when it comes will be cut in two round the middle, and with the bottom taken out this will make two miniature ponds. Two holes will be dug, the staves sunk, and the water made to stay *in situ* by puddling with clay, after the direction in Barr's catalogue. The rain-water supply is close by, so that any loss from evaporation can be easily made good every day in hot weather. Round the two sunk tubs, which are really not tubs, but may be called so for convenience sake, I shall make a subdued rockwork border, and plant *Lythrum* and the *Globe Flowers*, with their roots well tucked up in the grateful coolth of stones: also *Primulas*. This bit of ground is not very dry even as it is, so I fancy they will do. The worst thing about the plan is that climbing ambition has fixed its desires on *Laydekeri rosea*, which costs 15s., is a lovely pink colour, and smells sweetly; while *odorata pumila*, the little white fragrant *Water Lily* from America, is much more likely to succeed in such humble surroundings, and only costs 2s. 6d. or so. The yellow *Nymphæas* are all much cheaper than the pinks in proportion, and I am inspired to try *Helveola*, a little pale Evening Primrose - coloured plant with pretty

February

bronzy leaves, for my second tub. The planting is simple enough, but good quality heavy loam is indispensable. A layer of well-rotted cow manure is put in first, then loam and a little manure about a foot deep; then the Lily rhizome, tied to a tuft or stone, is planted, and the water let in. Mr Barr recommends the addition of a little broken-up charcoal to keep everything sweet, and I think that the addition of an inch or so of river gravel on the top of the loam would improve the appearance of the miniature pond still further. *Nymphæas* are hardy, especially in these parts, but they must be protected from frost, and for this purpose I shall have a wooden cover made for each pond, which, with the near neighbourhood of the heated greenhouse, ought to answer, as only the severest frost gets into the cold frame close by. Business is very active in the greenhouse just now, for the oblong expects to be largely supplied from it. As I like a perennial garden—and it is pretty closely planted, the borders being blocked out in lengths of three feet or four feet, each devoted to one class of planting—there is no room for bedding-out, but there are always gaps to be filled up. I am keen on having the encircling walls,

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which are of old limestone, delightfully lichenized and full of cracks, thick with Stonecrops, Houseleeks, and Dianthus. I have mixed seeds of all these with stiff soil, and pushed it into all the chinks, and sown Wallflower and the Cheddar Pink in the interstices of the coping; but in case of failure, the second halves of all the packets have been sown in the cold frame, and a box of mixed Saxifrage seedlings in this greenhouse is making second leaf. The interest of raising perennials from seed is not half appreciated. They can be sown almost at any time in a warm greenhouse, and there they are not so slow in germinating as when only sown in a summer frame after the approved fashion. I have *Viola cornuta* just thickening in a pan close to the glass and a big panful of seeds of the hardy *Primulas*, so that the pan is a standing dish in the greenhouse for many months. *Pentstemon* hybrids occupy another pan. One block of the sunny border is devoted to these lovely flowers, which are not thought half enough of by amateur gardeners. Their flowering time is so long, if they have plenty of manure, and they are so useful for cutting; while even if a very severe winter finishes them,

February

two or three potfuls of early autumn cuttings kept in a cold frame will furnish a fresh supply very easily. All flowers with campanulate or tubular blooms, from the spotted Foxglove to the glorious Gloxinia, appeal to me very strongly, and my earliest joy among them is in the Fritillaries. These are supposed to be rather particular and to do best in shade, but I find they will grow anywhere here. Anything more exquisitely fairy-like than an unexpected white or yellow Fritillary dancing on its hair-like stem I defy Oberon himself to show me, and these dainty flowers take up little space, yet they are very seldom seen in gardens.

¹ I am not sure that the idea did not originate either in France or America, where the hybrid *Nymphæas* are so well grown : but I first saw it mentioned by Mr Barr.

² Since this was written the prices of these water-lilies have been much reduced.

III

MARCH

EVERYTHING is very late this year. The Snowdrops, as is their custom, even when they appear a full fortnight earlier, as they did last season, made no sign until a few days ago, and then suddenly appeared in their hundreds; whereupon the Crocuses, not to be outdone, produced a mass of yellow blooms, with a few scattered striped or blue cups prematurely flaunting here and there. Yet a week ago, when I went round, both Snowdrops and Crocuses were hardly showing bud at all. The sparrows, with their annoying scent for saffron, are down at once, of course, and have spoiled a good many of the Crocuses. Saffron is an old-fashioned remedy for moulting cage-birds, but whether it was given as a laxative, which it is, and was supposed to assist the fall of the old feathers in some mysterious way, or whether it was intended as a colour food, for which purpose it has some adaptability, tradition sayeth not, so far as my

March

library goes. The sparrows, however, will not moult until late August, so they have no excuse but gluttony for their destructive work, which they also carry out on Carnations and Pinks. Every Pink in the garden has had all its leaves tipped, as mistaken gardeners tip the foliage of Carnation and Pink cuttings, thereby causing loss of sap and loss of vigour to the cutting, which wants all it has of the latter to enable it to throw out roots. Perhaps all this is due revenge for the hanging of suet by swinging threads, whereby only such welcome visitors as the tits are able to partake, and the clumsy sparrow has to see himself entirely left out.

The quaint Dog's-tooth Violet is bravely up, with its lovely Arum-like spotted leaves, two folded together and half open, like a pair of hands bringing up a tender pink offering to the moist, soft air now prevailing. I planted a great number of the ordinary (mixed) Erythroniums in the autumn, but they are not visible yet, and I feel rather afraid that they never will be, for they were an auction lot, and for the most part decidedly shrivelled. Auctions present the most vivid temptation to the amateur whose ambitions outrun his purse, but, on the whole, I think

A Garden in the Suburbs

it is best to buy less from a nurseryman and pay more for it, unless one is able to attend the sales and look at the lots. With all the care which I have no doubt is taken, the condition of the bulbs is very varied, even at the big London sales whose promoters are of the most undoubted respectability; and when this is taken into account, there is not much saving in the end. For professional gardeners and those who can go to the sales, opportunities are afforded of getting really wonderful bargains; and, indeed, a little list I filled up not long ago brought me some rare Indian Lilies, apparently perfectly healthy bulbs, for a mere nothing; whereat much rejoicing! Country town auction sales of Roses, etc., are often got up by people who are not at all to be trusted, and the most tempting-looking rows of Rose bushes, all beautifully uniform and most neatly cut and tied up, are apt to turn out very differently to the result promised by their labels. Two or three years ago a couple of men went round this town with a large cart-barrow, whereon were quantities of the most healthy-looking Carnation plants imaginable, each done up neatly in moss and bast and labelled. They found eager purchasers, one of whom, now writing,

March

somewhat distrustful at the time, expended 2s. 6d. on an experiment of five, and was in no wise surprised to find that "Crimson Clove," "White Clove," "Germania," and "Alice Ayres" grew profusely and blossomed sparsely with single blooms of a dirty pink and about as big as a sixpence! To judge by the crowds around that barrow, a good many people hereabouts have been disappointed in Carnation growing. Sometimes we see cartloads of the freshest green Palms, which are offered at low prices. These have been well forced on, and, like most of "all a-growing and blowing's" stock, bitterly resent their open-air peregrinations following on their native hottest of hot-houses, and wholly refuse to be happy in any human habitation. Apropos of the migration of a plant from its first home, I had a gift the other day for my little greenhouse, consisting of a couple of small pots, one containing what had been a thriving *Saintpaulia ionantha*, and the other a small *Gloire de Lorraine Begonia*. Unluckily, these were a secondary bestowal, and had been given by the gardener who grew them to a friend of mine, who has no green-house, with the polite, but mislead-

A Garden in the Suburbs

ing assurance that they would grow in her drawing-room. To this end they had been assisted with an over-plentiful supply of hard cold water, and Saintpaulia had rotted at the core in the insidious way its family have, whereby the crown of the leaves looks all right, but on examination is found to be only connected with the root by sundry links of rottenness. The Begonia, after the manner of its kind, dropped all its leaves as a protest, and the recovery of either is more than doubtful. Pity, since the rather insignificant flowers of the former—little black-eyed scraps of bright lilac velvet—are so plentiful as to strike a charming note of colour against its grey-green plush leaves, while the deliciously toned crisp pink Begonia blooms crowd all over the plant till it is a very drooping pyramid of clear rose.

A visit to the small frame which helps to supply the oblong with winter-tender or seedling beauties is also a treat to me. Just now it is full of a neat array of small pots of hybrid Columbines—Aquilegia is a pretty word, but Columbine a prettier—Mimulus of a particularly charming strain, whereof the big blooms vary from palest unspotted primrose to deepest and most fiercely blotched

March

crimson, and single Pyrethrums, fast covering their pots with a spread of fresh foliage like carrot-tops. All these, sown last summer, would have stood a mild winter out of doors, but as there was the chance of a hard one, I kept half my stock of seedlings in the frame, and they are four times the size of those in the beds and will blossom earlier, thus keeping up a succession. Among a few cuttings in the cold frame are some bits of *Buddleia globosa*, which I brought with me from our last garden, and which have rooted beautifully. This shrub is one of my pet plants, and is not half so much used as it deserves. It is pretty either as a bush or on a wall, and has a tropical look which is very attractive, the cool sage-green, pointed leaves, lined under with silver, beating the Willow by superior size and crinkly formation which charms the eye. The Orange balls, about as big as a Cherry, from which it takes its English name—Orange-ball Shrub—are delightful in colour, and it produces them freely when the sun reaches it; and yet its roots can be in sweet moist loam. Another of my favourites is *Veronica spicata*, but I have only the blue form, which seems glad to grow wherever I choose to stick in a twig of it. Very soon

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we shall have a gay row of Dean's hybrid Primroses ; already they are catching up their brethren, Wilson's blues, which have been struggling to flower all through the snows of January and early February. This is their second year in both cases, so must sow more when July comes. I do not find it advisable to sow any seeds in the open here, for this soil dries very fast on the surface, and all my perennials and biennials are raised in the frame, which can easily be shaded and kept moist, while it is easy to mulch the parched-out seedlings with a sprinkling of cocoa fibre.

.

A very trite reflection nearly always obtrudes itself on me when I am casting an eye round my friends' small gardens, to wit, how little use they make of their opportunities. No matter how charming the situation or how fertile the soil—and I often have reason to envy both—the same few common plants are visible everywhere, and even when someone makes a plunge into something a little varied, only the most every-day and the cheapest variety of each plant is to be seen. Probably this lack of enterprise and interest is to be found on two counts—the dislike of the

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gardener, if there is one, and more especially of the jobbing gardener, in whom so many lady owners of gardens will persist in feeling implicit confidence, to novelty, and the fear of expense. The frugal feminine mind, quite oblivious of the perpetual drain on the purse of that "odd-and-end" shopping in which it so often finds delight, is generally filled with horror at the mere idea of giving three or four shillings, at the very outside, for a plant, and overlooks the fact that money spent on rare plants is often put out to interest, in that a slip, a cutting, or some seeds may rejoice the hearts of others who have seen and admired them, serve as acceptable presents, and even, being marketable, give return in kind. Many women make money out of their gardens, and though I think personally that it must take away all, or nearly all, the charm of flower gardening to put it on a business basis, yet I should not carp if a good many more, who at present excuse their vapid, half-empty flower borders on the plea of poverty, set to work to make the money necessary for filling them by salad-culture, or the growing of early vegetables and like produce, which, if only they could be got to put up their stock-in-trade neatly and according

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to market practice, and if they were lucky enough to possess some business ability (wherein is comprised punctuality and despatch), would find a ready sale. The demand for garden produce, especially in country towns, always seems equal to the supply, and when I am compelled by necessity to earn my own living otherwise than at present, I shall certainly engage in horticulture, for without interfering at all with the trade growers there is room for me and a few others. Meanwhile, I have wandered away in the most rambling manner from my text, which partakes of surreptitious self-gratification, in that I usually spend every penny of my pocket-money on the most interesting plants—new to this garden at anyrate—which it will compass, and also try to avoid having exactly the same thing as my next-door neighbour. In one particular, however, I am afraid I shall be accused of plagiarism—the new Rose bed. It was made in the autumn, a narrow bed all across the top of the oblong lawn, with a foot of grass between it and the path, and as it is in full sunshine, was very deeply dug and some rare turfy loam turned in; loam of that beautiful yellow, greasy texture which Roses so love, and wherein they can have

March

a deep run. The imitation of next door comes in in the arrangement; but as my bed is distinctly inferior in this respect, perhaps I shall only be thought guilty of the imitation which is flattery. Along the further side of the bed, which is about three feet wide, are seven climbers of rampant growth—W. Allen Richardson, Kaiserin Friedrich, l'Idéal, Solfaterre, Gustave Regis, Climbing Souvenir de Malmaison, and Bouquet d'Or. These were chosen, avoiding red Roses like Reine Marie Henriette, partly because there are several red Roses on the walls, and partly because of the very strong sun here in summer, which will, I fear, turn poor William Allen into sad parchment, also partly because we have not got any of them elsewhere. They are supported, and here the inferiority comes in, by some branching Ash poles about nine feet high, which are by no means equal to next door's nice neat Fir poles, with wire arches between. Perhaps the Roses may make the balance even; their rivals are only two, Gloire de Dijon and a smallish red Rose whose name I am not sure of, and which rather fades in colour in the heat and goes off in a depressing magenta. The Gloire, of course, is, being of old

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establishment and well cared for, a glory indeed ; but I have a prejudice against this Rose's habit of perpetual heavenly aspiration. It fixes all its ideas on the sky, and too often resembles a Highlander with an immense feather bonnet and long bare legs.

I have been unable to get Fir poles. The present excuse, "on account of the war," was not advanced, strange to say, but they have not been cutting the woods about here. Last year I might have had them for the asking, and next year I shall have done without and be so much the richer. Between each of the climbers, which have had ample room left them to expand, is a bush Hybrid Tea ; these are chiefly pink, and at the foot of each and two feet apart is a miniature or fairy Rose. The extreme outer edge of the bed is planted with yellow *Viola Ardwell Gem*, and its inner edge with pink Tulips, to be succeeded by *Nemesia strumosa*, now about to be sown in the greenhouse. The *Violas*, which so resent drought, can run their roots under the edges of the grass, and meanwhile they are greedily over-running the layer of top-dressing given to the Roses, which embraces them. These delightful little plants

March

are a good instance for quotation apropos of the inertia and indifference of many amateurs. They — not the amateurs — have been improved almost out of knowledge within the last few years. And though they are not supposed to like the south of England they do well about here, and last for years if planted out of the hottest sun ; yet I hardly ever see any, and where they occur only the commonest blues and dark purples, except in one instance where an enterprising and clever young gardener had bedded out some specimens as nearly black as it is possible for a flower to be. I cannot myself see any charm in these, though they are quaint and uncommon ; but the loveliness of a wide spread of lilac, mauve, or delicate tones of yellow, more or less denied to me for want of space, seems unpopular with owners of larger gardens. Of all *Violas* my favourite is *William Neil*, which catalogues always describe as “rose,” whereas it is an exquisite shade of pale mauve or lilac, unapproachable except by one or two *Clematises*. Next to this I love *Devonshire Cream* ; a bed of these two with a relief of fine rayless whites is a joy of clear delicate colour. I lost most of my new *Violas* last year through a

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delay in the journey which brought them ; the lapse of time was too much for them, and though the vendor, who was not in fault at all, generously replaced them in the kind way nurserymen who really take an interest in their clients have, the second lot were late in rooting and then suffered from drought. This year their reserved powers are bubbling up into a perfect frenzy of growth and spread. In the sunny border there is a delightful colony of the big Dog's-tooth Violets, which have been waiting to flower for weeks, with their mauve-pink buds so tightly shut up on the stalk that crouches to escape cold winds, and their charming spotted Arum-like leaves. None of the ordinary Erythroniums are even showing yet, the giganteum having here many weeks' start. The Nymphæas have been safely planted, and a cold and splashy job it was.

An error lay in my expressed determination of puddling the miniature ponds with clay, a recommendation out of date, which I heard to be so before consummating the plan. The Lilies grow through the clay and take the water with them ; therefore the better, as the much easier, plan is to leave the bottoms

March

in the tubs used, and this I have done. All my hardy Primulas, planted in groups over the irregular mounded rockery round the Lily tubs, are coming on fast. *P. denticulata alba* has won the race among about twenty sorts, and is in its snowball glory of round heads. The Abyssinian Primrose, with its delicate scent, so thin and piercing, is out in the greenhouse close by. I think this one of the prettiest of spring flowers, the yellow is so uncommon and the powdered leaves so neat.

IV

APRIL

THE *Chionodoxa gigantea* are, alas! just over. They have been lovely, and, beginning with the *Crocuses*, have far outlasted them. The tone of colour is exquisite, the white centre very showy, and the price so little more than that of the much less attractive *Chionodoxa Luciliæ* that I shall plant yards of them this next autumn. They take no notice at all of snow and east winds, and will open without sunshine, each vividly blue star being as big as a florin in outer dimension. *Puschkinia libanotica* is now in full swing; it has come up very unevenly, the bulbs apparently travelling apart a good deal after planting, which was performed in close clumps in the sunny border; but every bulb has bloomed, and the close-set, firm little spikes of whity-blue, like very double elongated *Squills*, each rising out of its two neat very dark green leaves, are decidedly pleasing. The white *Pyrus*

April

japonica is generally admired ; it cannot compare with the red and pink ones in size of bloom, as far as my specimen is concerned, but it is most profusely covered with blossoms set all along its branches to the very end. It is the only shrub I know so utterly indifferent to the sun ; it brought out its first blooms all obstinately turned towards the wall and away from his majesty's glance. The Wallflower bed close by, designed to throw up this white-flowered shrub with the pinky chamois blooms of Wallflower Salmon Queen, is a disappointment. Three weeks of blizzards and cutting wind have defaced the leaves, and the plants looked pinched by the want of geniality just when they started growth and bud.

I have made new enemies in the black-birds, who dive their yellow bills savagely into the winter mulch not yet removed from parts of the garden where choice bulbs are pushing their noses through. The said mulch, a light one, was of old hotbed manure, and why the birds, having ignored it until now, should suddenly find it attractive I know not ; but they have broken a number of bulbs off, and are anathema. This garden feels the drought so much in summer, that I mean to leave

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the mulch on where needed, sifting a little fine soil over it, and stirring the surface under it with a small fork so as to prick it in a little.

Have any flowers so gallantly aggressive an approach as Pæonies, I wonder? Their great red Rhubarb-like points are intensely vigorous, and though the soil here is too light for their liking, I have ordered them a thick mulch of cow manure, and they are responding to its stimulus eagerly. There is a little scrap of rock border in the very hottest spot of this sun-baked area which has been rather a puzzle to me; it is almost eighteen inches wide, and is backed by a bit of glaring smooth wall.

Zauschneria californica and *Helianthemums* share the border, and what can I put on the bit of wall? Some Constance Elliott Passion Flower shoots come round a corner on to it, but do not cover it. I think of *Thunbergias* here; they love sunshine, and do not make much root, for which there is not room. Their buff and white flowers with black throats have an exotic charm, but they always look as if they smelt sweetly, and it is a disappointment to find them scentless. "What will you do," asks the voice of the "Drag on

April

the Wheel" (possessed by this household, as by most others), "when you have crammed every square inch of the garden?"—it is not far off it now—"You will have nothing to do, and nothing to scribble about, then!" But did a woman who is really fond of gardening ever listen to counsels of moderation so long as one square inch remained unfilled and there was a penny in the purse? "I shall begin taking up all the commoner things and putting in the rarest and dearest instead," I jubilantly reply, and prudence subsides into silent disapproval. I have begun on this plan already by sacrificing some *Pyrethrums* that had not passed a happy winter and looked struggling, owing to having been planted out too late; they took up a piece of the best border where the made soil is very rich, though light, and where there is abundance of sunshine. Their place is now occupied by *Polygonum baldschuanicum*, with a triangle of bean sticks, in which it can, if it only will, form a pyramid; *Michauxia campanuloides*, of which Miss Jekyll speaks so affectionately that everyone must wish to try it; *Incarvillea Delavayi*, and a big clump of *Sanguinaria canadensis* in the forefront. If they will only be kind and

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pleasant, this piece of border ought to be a joy, though it will certainly be a scrap of the dot-about system we are told is so vicious. In an oblong, however, a certain amount of breadth may be sacrificed to variety, though I have tried as far as possible to give at least one yard of ground to plants of a sort, and have my dotting-about done in clumps.

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One person's experience is not necessarily a guide for others, but if honestly recorded is usually suggestive, and frequently finds prompt corroboration. The gaudy coloured-picture packets of seeds of annuals seen from March onwards in small greengrocers' and in not a few cornchandlers' shops are tempting in appearance, but when we consider the expenses involved in harvesting and packing seed, not to speak of the initial expense of growing the parent plants, it will be evident that it is hardly worth while to devote any part of one's penny to the purchase of coloured pictures—which are not produced for nothing. As a matter of fact, much of the seed in these gorgeous packets is old stuff, left over from a previous year, if not of still more respectable antiquity, and when such seed germinates

April

at all, it does so feebly, producing very inferior flowers. That good plants can be had from penny packet seed I would not like to deny; but I believe it to be much better to spend a little more money in buying better seed, if in a less number of varieties. As a rule, the amateur, in the purchase of seeds, falls headlong into his worst pitfall—undue desire for variety. A little pinch of this and a little spot of that, dots of *Nemophila*, and *Nasturtium* of mixed colours, *Virginian Stock* in thin, crowded, and feeble lines; a seething tangle of *Mignonette* here, and a few weedy *Godetias* of no particular colour further on—always the ordinary yellow *Eschscholtzia* and mixed *Sweet Peas*, insufficiently manured and sticked—these are the vices of many a garden worthy of better things. There are very many quite common annuals capable of most interesting development, and of these the *Nasturtium* is one. Let us take, for example, one of the German collections of *Nasturtium* seed, which we can buy at any good florist's and nurseryman's shop. All the varieties contained in the collection, which consists of a large envelope enclosing a number of small packets with a few seeds of some named colour in

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each, could be equally well, or better by the patriotic, bought separately at home, but for the fact that the novice probably has no good list at hand, and does not know in the least that there are so many different hues among the ordinary dwarf Nasturtium — he has always seen it a nondescript reddish-yellow. After this year's experience he will be wiser. Well, then, let us say that our collection is of the following six varieties, none of them at all unlikely to be included in the packet, which may cost 1s. 6d. or 2s.: Golden King, clear yellow; Empress of India, deep scarlet and dark-leaved; The Pearl, cream or pale primrose-coloured; King Theodore, very dark red; Aurora, an indescribable pinky-chamois of most charming tone; and Crystal Palace Gem, yellow, spotted with red. Of each there are enough seeds to make a grand patch of colour covering a square yard of ground, and on no account should these patches or blocks of colour be divided or jumbled up, although they should not be too square or mathematically exact. It is not too late in April to sow them in the open, although for this kind of work it is best to raise Nasturtiums in pots, three or

April

four seeds in a six-inch pot, and turn the clumps into the ground without disturbance when the plants are three inches high and have been hardened off. Each potful, when planted out, should have a good clear space round it, and the colours and sorts must, of course, be plainly indicated by labels when sowing. The effect of a group of *Nasturtiums* of this kind, and especially of a bed or small border filled with blocks of separate colours, is very fine, and no one who has seen it ought to be willing to exchange it for two shillings' worth of mixed annuals on the dot system.

Sweet Peas, as another subject which can be sown at intervals up to July, deserve colour-planting, and it is easy to conjecture what a good gardener could make of these. They are sold by colour everywhere, and the range of pinks obtainable in them is particularly good, for we can have a sweep of clear pink from blush through Apple-blossom up to crimson, without a single "malignant magenta." The yellows, unluckily, are still not worth sowing for colour, but where one can get such delicate pure blues, lavenders, and roses, yellow can be dispensed with, and there is a faint primrose which, if

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insignificant, is pretty against a pure white.

Large masses of *Eschscholtzias* are very effective, and there are several new forms of these which are worth growing. The striped pink and white, with a frilled or accordion-pleated surface, are exceedingly pretty, though small in flower, so are the pure whites, and the double white is very striking close to the deep orange Mandarin; while the Rose Cardinal also groups beautifully with the white form. One of the few annuals, which, however, looks best in mixture, is *Salpiglossis*. This is not everybody's flower, because, to give real gratification, it must be what gardeners call "well done." It cannot do itself credit in poor or dry soil, and it needs careful mulching and feeding to bring it to perfection. But when "well done," then, indeed, we have a colour picture, and a mass of *Salpiglossis* in which actual harsh colour is so dominated by golden hues, stripes, and netting as to be soothed into one richly and gloriously harmonious whole, never looks better than when rising from a bed carpeted with the *Petunia*, which must be selected for the occasion, and magenta eliminated, for this hue, one of Nature's pertinacious

April

favourites, obtains in the Petunia, as elsewhere, far too freely. A sweet setting for the occasion would be a double white Petunia, and some of the pure pink and deliciously soft delicate mauve doubles would harmonise well, while Verbenas would also please the eye.

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We have all heard of, read, or seen the famous advice to the matrimonially disposed, also the manual of etiquette—or the want of it—bearing the title “Don’t”! but there are many oft-spoken or hitherto suppressed “don’ts” which deserve compilation, and commendation to the attention of the more or less amateur gardener, whose ideas are apt to run in a groove. To begin with—and this is, perhaps, the most important of all the “don’ts”—don’t forget that things grow! A Cedar of Lebanon is a handsome object where it can have a whole hillside to itself and a few companions to set it off; a Wellingtonia may be to some extent an ornament to a suburban garden while it is only six feet high; in a few years’ time they will both begin to eat up the Grass under them and the soil all round them, and to look thoroughly out of place. Don’t plant

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forest trees in small or moderate-sized gardens; leave them where they are in scale with their surroundings. Put things in your gardens which are too choice for the lanes and fields. Mr Robinson's wish to see acres of Laurels grubbed and burnt to make room for beautiful flowering shrubs finds echo in many a case where a small lawn is disfigured by beds of those atrocities "mixed shrubs." In the middle there may be a Conifer, so crowded that it has lost its lower branches, and some of its upper ones are half bare and brown; it is all on one side, too, and spindly. Squeezed against it are a Laurel, eating everything else out of earth and home, two or three Euonymuses, dear to the heart of the seaside lodging-house keeper, a Laurustinus, which would be tolerable alone, and a miserable, starved Rose-bush, which, if it had the whole bed to itself, might be a beautiful pyramid of almost evergreen leaf and profuse bloom. If you must have trees in small gardens, and cannot be contented with Lilac-bushes, flowering Hawthorns, pink and white, the so-called Syringas, which borrow the Lilac's proper name and are really Philadelphuses or Mock Orange—lovely masses of bloom and odour in

April

their season, and at all times pleasing—Bamboos of the hardier kinds, Guelder Roses, the Orange Ball tree, and hosts of other trim beauties, plant Apple-trees. Either have utility Apples—Blenheim Orange and Lord Suffield standards, for instance—or the delicious Crabs, whose wealth of blossom is poetry of spring in essence, and whose fruit is full of beauty, whose size is never overpowering, and whose shape contents the eye. Sweet Apple-trees on a stretch of lawn do very well if properly planted to begin with, provided they can have sun; they are profitable and lovely, and I should like to dig up hundreds of so-called ornamental trees in suburban and other gardens, fill a good pit with a load of rich loam, and put in a sound, clean, thrifty Apple to mark the calendar with rosy bloom and sweet fruit.

The *Field* led the way in suggesting another “don’t,” of which groove gardeners sorely need to be reminded. Don’t plant Privet hedges. As soon as they are in they turn brown, and spend their first summer in withering and their first winter in dying nakedly. After a year those which live begin to grow, and take all the goodness out of the ground

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after the manner of the greedy, voracious Laurel, and starve everything else within reach. A hedge of *Rosa rugosa* will cost a little more to begin with, but it will be beautiful from its very first budding, and a fierce defence with thorn and prickle, unlike the feeble Privet, a thoroughfare for any marauder. Both *R. rugosa* and Sweet Brier are bare in winter it is true, but the hedges hang on and the season of undress is very short. *Berberis* makes a lovely hedge, too, especially *B. stenophylla*, but it needs a little patience, and must have sun and good soil. I would fifty times sooner have a hedge of Gorse or Hawthorn than of Privet, and either is impenetrable when old enough. A lovely garden barrier can be made by using Holly with here and there *Pyrus japonica*, and there are endless combinations open to those who will take a little trouble in the interest of future gratification for themselves and others. Another "don't"—the last for this time—may seem hackneyed. Don't make a rockery a snailery—a sluggery—as you are setting about it. Don't get a heap of any poor, sour soil, black as ink, and mixed with ashes. Don't pile up clinkers in masses in it, and plant Primroses and Ferns, torn out



A SUNNY ROCKERY.

April

of the hedges by a hawk or your mistaken self. Make a raised bed of good, rich loam, with a liberal sprinkling of sand and leaf-mould, and a little peat. Flatten the top, more or less, and provide for proper drainage below: the depth of good soil should not be less than one foot. Then surround the bed with the best stones you can get, sinking them a little so that they may make a firm edge. Inside this plant *Dianthus* of sorts, *Alyssum*, *Aubrietia*, and other plants, hardy and common or rare and expensive, according to your purse and desire. Now plant the inside of the rockery bed, using groups of three plants or of six or twelve bulbs as may be, and lay or partly sink stones irregularly on the surface so that the roots of the plants are protected by them from sun, frost, and cold winds, while the foliage and flowers can ramble, creep, or stand up as Nature pleases. The subject of what to plant is illimitable, but in a well-made rockery like this field and wood plants will look less well than in their natural surroundings, while the rarer hardy Orchids, hardy Primulas, and alpine will always be admired and give endless interest, and hundreds of good garden plants offer

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themselves as suitable. In this rockery there will not be dry, empty chinks between clinkers where snails can mass themselves comfortably for the winter, but nothing can grow or root ; there will be no dusty, baked earth, searched by the east wind through and through, nor any dead Fern litter and harbour for hibernating slugs. It will be a rock garden, not a rockery, and I think you will find it better worth having.

V

MAY

I do not believe there ever was a valetudinarian gardener. The two hobbies—I am told some people really enjoy being ill—are incompatible. How I loathe being ill! How I fight it, rebel against it, garden up to the very last moment, and get up tottering to go out and replant the Violet bed—a thing this that must be done, and done by myself, if I want nice clumps of La France and California and Princess of Wales (very shy-flowering here), and all the other big new beauties to put my little frame over in September. But gardening in an east wind, such as we get in late April, in a dabbling way such as attends water-planting, and with the assistance of a crude youth smelling strongly of the stable, whose aid includes upsetting half a pailful of icy water over the enthusiast, is apt to bring about unpleasant consequences, dividing, as in my case, the

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lover from the beloved, the tiller from the soil, for a desperately dull and long-drawn-out decade of days.

My last autumn's planting of Violets has been in bloom ever since the middle of January, although no frame protection was given. I find California very easy to grow, and much more willing to bloom than the older, smaller, inferior varieties. The double Violets, however, take a long time to establish themselves in these parts, and do not seem to benefit by yearly division. Some Violet roots which were given to me when my own supply ran short have turned out delusions of meagre little scrappy white things, no better than field scented Violets, which are common enough about here, so I am grubbing them and filling their places with La France. I have had an immense pleasure this month. Gardeners are proverbially generous, and I have certainly met with such kindness from total strangers in the course of my life as should give me a high ideal of human nature in general ; but the generosity which for the mere love of giving and of conferring happiness will take the trouble to dig up of its very best, pack beautifully and abundantly, and despatch, to puff up the tyro with the

May

joy of possessing what his betters have struggled to produce and rejoiced in perfecting, is actually superb. Hampers are always agreeable visitors, whether they contain country produce, little dogs, pussy cats, or crockery ware, all of which come occasionally ; but a hamper of many rare plants—and some of them marked A1 by one who knows—is a delight beyond all describing. Several of the best forms of Asters—these grow wildly in our soil, walking away from their centres all round in the engaging way they have when happy—*Heliopsis lævis*, *Potentillas* of two charming kinds, the best of the Bergamots, the deification of Red-hot Pokers—all these and many more which I have seen praised, coveted, and shall now never have to do without. Was not this a pretty gift? And when I have opportunity I shall try to follow the good example of the kind giver—in a small way.

This week I am planting fifty single Begonias in a little round bed on the half-shady side of the house where there is a rather nasty little lawn, so cockneyfied, it was only fit to cut up into small beds. The soil is mainly clay and builder's rubbish, and is as unpromising as possible, so the beds have been made of loam, leaf-

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mould, hotbed manure, and sand. There is a great *Philadelphus* in one corner, which nominally lives next door, but is quite at home here ; it is one of the finest forms, and seems to like its shady position, for last year it was glorious, while another on the sunny side was not half so floriferous. It eats up the ground, however, as badly as any *Laurel*, and its hungry roots are always asking for more. Its companion sentinel is a beautiful *Arbutus*, which fruits profusely. But don't look further ; you will only see very common hardy *Ferns*, which I hope you detest as much as I do. They remind me of frowsy landladies with black alpaca aprons and greasy black caps, appearing in the place of sweet young *Phyllises* in coloured ribbons and fair cambric.

We have had a fortnight's bravery of pink *Hyacinths* and double *Daffodils*. The combination sounds rather eccentric, but is effective, the *Hyacinths* being waxy pale *Norma*, of a tone just suiting the *Daffodils'* yellow. I am an epicure in *Hyacinths*, and like to savour them by yearly tints. Last year, however, we had so many blue ones of one shade, that we were all sick of their monotony. All pinks or all whites are well enough, but

May

there is something very wearying about a mass of blue Hyacinths unrelieved.

Last autumn I made a large sowing of *Dianthus*, mixed, in all the wall crevices and rockwork cracks which seemed eligible, and about a month ago, discovering the remainder of this packet of seed in my desk, I turned it into a pot in which some other seeds had failed to come up. Whatever had been the cause of failure agreed with the *Dianthus*, for in three days it was up, and is flourishing amazingly, though nothing is visible of the autumn-sown seed. I have a great affection for the Cheddar Pink, but I cannot yet get it to grow here; we have no limestone, but it might put up with chalk. *Anemone pulsatilla* is quite agreeable when presented with the humbler article, but the Cheddar Pink refuses absolutely to oblige. Mule Pinks—*Dianthus Napoleon III.*—planted on one of the rockeries are very sulky. Carnations grow, but do not flower very freely, and a long line of florist's Pinks of different kinds—Paddington, Alice Lee, Charles, Lizzie Duval, Mrs Pettifer—began to grow half-heartedly, and stopped very suddenly when the sparrows pecked them. I think there is something in the soil the family

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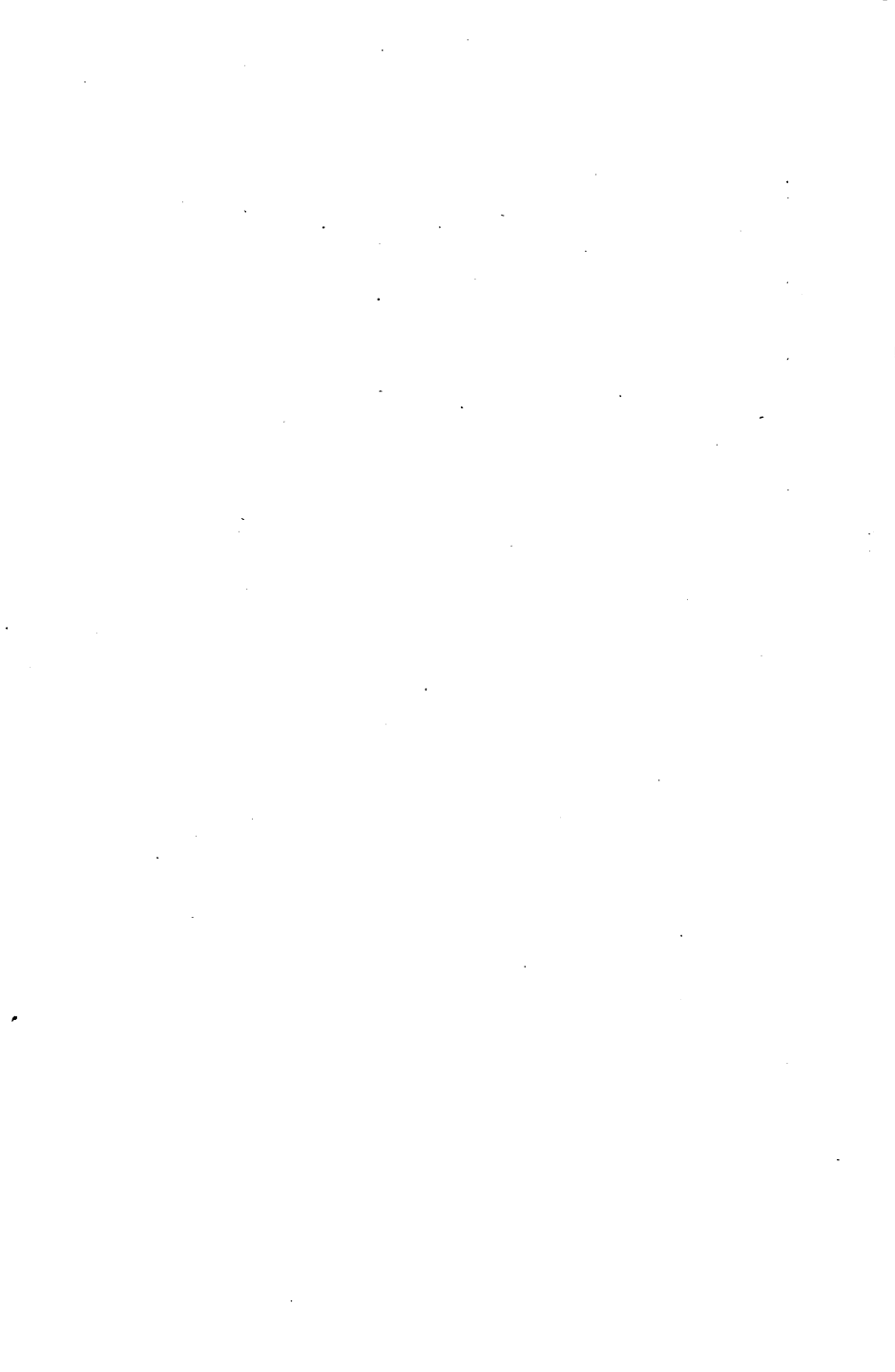
does not like. A neighbour of ours has a large bed of that single very pale pink alpine Pink—*Dianthus superbus*—which is much fringed and smells so ineffably delicious, like yellow Sweet Sultan, but sweeter still. I covet this, but I fear it will not grow with me. Limestone again, I suppose!

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Some three years ago, when "Wilson" blue Primroses were very precious, I bought three plants from an advertiser in some non-gardening paper. The first season one did not bloom; the others turned out to be—one a dark rich beautiful blue, the other an exquisite light blue between sky, porcelain and Cambridge. There were no seeds ripe this first year; the next summer I saved and sowed two pods, one from the pale blue and the other from the hitherto unbloomed plant, which was a dark blue. The resulting dozen plants are now in full swing in the Oblong, but, alas! there is not one sweet light blue among them. Eight are reds, one is a pretty shade of blue-lilac, not showy, one a darker shade of the same, one a nice purple, and one a washy lilac-purple. These are results in a small way



COLCHICUMS IN THE BROOME BOTANIC GARDEN, BATH



May

with a vengeance! But so far as they go they do not encourage home seed-saving. The chief merit of the plants is their positively enormous floriferousness. They are one mass of bloom, tightly packed all over, obliterating the leaves, and are dense clumps of colour, not very gay, but pretty enough in their way. I have just counted sixty-six blossoms on one tuft not quite seven inches across, all these in perfect condition. Some bought seed of the blue variety, sown later, has produced plants whose blooms are all very rich and deep self colours, violets, reds, and purples, with good yellow eyes, and grand in size, but up to the present not one real blue. I want a whole bed of those China blues! There was one plant of this delicious hue in the botanic gardens here—I think the spring before last—among a number of others of different shades, and I heard that some wretch stole it, to the great grief of everybody concerned except himself, for he was never found out. This spring the curator had to mourn the loss of a handsome tuft of *Galanthus plicatus*, planted close to a group of ordinary Snowdrops, in order that the public might compare the two varieties. Apropos of which I may re-

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mark that if you meet boys selling Crocuses in comparatively small numbers in a suburb of a country town, it is generally wise to draw a policeman's attention to their identity.

The Apennine Anemone, the lovely *A. fulgens*, and the St Brigid all flowered together here. They are in quite different places; the blue darling in a neat cushion close to a violet bed, in partial shade of the right-hand further Apple tree; the *Anemone fulgens* to the right of the great Sweet Briar bush in the hither end of the South African border; the Poppy Anemones in the hottest, sunniest corner by the steps. It is not an ideal spot for the latter, as it gets very dry at times, but they are in the most rollicking health at present.

Some chequered Fritillaries are growing out of the mat of Apennine Anemones, and the partnership is effective, the Snake's-head standing well up above the "wooden enemies!" A little colony of *Puschkinia libanotica* close by in the grass flowered much later than the rest in the sunny border, but was far less effective, smaller, and evidently ill-suited to its position, while the border blooms were remarkably fine and large. I have made a delightful

May

discovery. The Fortune's Yellow Rose I planted from a pot last year against one of the sunny buttresses is full of flower buds. It was an extra-sized plant, and I wanted it to do well most particularly because everybody told me it was such a shy bloomer and would never do in these parts.¹ I do not think this will be a first year flash, to be succeeded by death or stagnation, for the whole Rose is quivering with life and bursting with shoots and leafage. It kept quite green and lost few, if any, leaves all the winter, and it was *very* carefully planted and will be well mulched later.

I must give up Polyanthuses, I think. They have so little pluck, lying down and wallowing in such an abject manner the moment they feel the sun. Coloured Primroses cheek by jowl with them stand up bravely, never turning a leaf, and there are those feeble-minded things, great healthy clumps too, abasing themselves and pretending it is flaccid, gasping August. The yellows are worse than the reds, but even the latter are contemptible when Sol appears.

Tulips have done very well this year. I suppose all bulbs liked the roasting heat of last summer. I had a rather large bed

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of mixed sorts, planted in groups of five; this is the bed where the Fuchsias go afterwards, and it gets very little sun. The Tulips do not seem to object to shade at all; the blooms were later than those in sunny places, but stood better, and were fleshy and full of substance. The effect of the bed, however, was patchy, as was to be expected, the Van Thols appearing first, then some clear yellow Tulip, whose name I do not know, and "the lave" in a rush. Cottage Maid is, to my mind, the sweetest Tulip that grows. The rosy Apple blossom pink of her petal tips and the delicious cream and lemon chalices, in which she offers gold powder to the sun, are the dream of a poet materialised, and she is a nice, compact, sturdy little flower, with a big head and tiny leaves, and strength to stand upright on her stalk. Of course I have the gorgeous Parrots and splashy flaunting May beauties; but if I might only have one Tulip, it would be the Maid. She was well set off by a triangular patch of *Triteleia uniflora* close by, which looked like a swarm of white butterflies all poised of a height over some particular attraction. Nearly all the planting is done now. I go round every day with my poor humble margarine bucket

May

full of best potting soil, my trowel, grubbing mat to kneel on and sundry boxes of seedlings, and fill up corners, but this is only play-work. Seedlings do love a little of the very best nice rich soil to give them a start, and the green-painted margarine bucket does the work of a successful crammer in supplying pabulum for the novitiate. I do not care much for annuals in such small gardens as this where space is so precious, but I have a few ready for corners. The pretty *Myosotis striata coelestina*, single Asters, Aster Christmas Tree from Germany, Cosmos and *Nemesia* tell the tale : chosen because the soil here suits the Aster family splendidly. Next year I shall try some uncommon annuals, such as *cleome pungens*, the *Leptosiphons*, *Calandrinia discolor*, *Nolana grandiflora*, and *Martynia proboscidea*, all of which, with others unjustly forgotten, may be seen in that delightful old book, Mrs Loudon's "Ladies' Flower Garden."

¹ This rose turned out later on to be only a yellow Banksian !

VI

JUNE

THE oblong is not an Adamless Eden, but the Adam thereof has not inherited his direct ancestor's tastes or necessities, and its walls enclose a little area where female suffrage reigns, or deserves to do so, for its pains. Adam valiantly undertook the weeding when the oblong was first entered upon, also the mowing, and performs the latter operation weekly, with a moderate application of the goad of reminder. The former engagement, however, is now explained to have in no wise comprised any hand-weeding, and resolves itself into a diurnal promenade with a hoe, the blade of which preserves a strict impartiality between weeds and bulbs' noses. The mere female is thus usefully employed as a kind of following harrow, collecting half-severed weeds, smoothing over unsightly scrapes, where a bit of grass has resisted the tool, and making moan over promise below the surface untimely topped, which is generally stigmatised as a base in-

June

gratitude for services rendered. Adam is a flower lover, but of the eye only, and neither willing to spend nor be spent in the service. Quite peacefully will he sit—and did he sit all last summer—reading and smoking under the shade of the big Apple tree, while the wretched parched oblong shouted for water. With sweet playfulness did he comment on the unbecoming weariness of those who panted round with splashing cans in its succour; *never* did it appear to him better to draw and give a can of water than to watch a flourishing clump droop and wither. Adam is no gardener at heart, and he likes his gardening done for him, more or less, as circumstances allow, but certainly with the minimum of cost; whereas the true garden enthusiast is totally incapable of thrift in face of a seed list or a catalogue. Who that has only once tasted the delights of marking a catalogue newly arrived hot from the press and post, full of novelties, could think of anything so dull as economy! There are other inmates of the oblong garden, too, who have no horticultural tastes, unless it be for digging, exactly where that operation is least needed—in the middle of the lawn for choice. I do not think that readers

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who love their gardens will like to hear of the deeds of these gentry, to whom bone-meal in a flower bed suggests operations akin to those of the old time gold-miner; they are dark and tailless trials imported from Holland and Belgium, and shall remain obscure, now that I have filled up that last batch of holes in the lawn.

There are one or two plants which year after year, although I know their ways by this time, give me a shock by pretending that something untoward has happened to them, and they are not going to bloom properly. The *Azalea mollis* always plays this little Artemus Wardian "goak" with peculiar zest. Its buds open in the most hopeless way from a tight clump of indefinite drab segments folded together into dry and withered-looking sections, like little bad oranges split up, and for days these remain with no promise at all until the colour begins to stain their tips. Then in two days they have exquisite blooms which last astonishingly beyond their fragile appearance. I think for small gardens like this Azaleas are a wonderful boon, and infinitely preferable to Rhododendrons in their compactness and their delicious scent. In fact, one could not have

June

Rhododendrons in an oblong with any show of dignity whatever, especially remembering them, as I do, in their full beauty in the large garden of a house we once occupied in Essex. The soil there was sandy, and Roses did very poorly, but the Rhododendrons flourished amazingly, and great veterans many yards through were perfect haystacks of bloom. In this part of the world they are either not popular or unhappy, for no one about here has such good ones. But then we *can* grow Roses!

I have just shifted on my few Chrysanthemums. They are not favourites, but I must have just a few to bring in when there are no other flowers. I cannot give up any of my precious south border to things which are so dull all through the summer, and they will not do anything on the shady side, so they are in pots. But I am letting a single Chrysanthemum or two into the sacred enclosure; not the horrid annual single things, which I dislike because I think their foliage mean and their colours rasping and "mixty," but the real singles. The soft pinks are very pretty, so are the yellows, and the former are distinct among flowers. I saw a couple of well-grown

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plants in nine-inch pots last year which pleased me very much; they were about two and a half feet high, and covered all over with charming La France Rose-coloured blooms like pink single Daisies, each about the size of a shilling. One is not tired of them as of the ordinary Chrysanthemum, which always strikes me as a coloured production, not a flower, and they look very easy to grow. I am dearly fond of pink flowers, and the first of my seedling single Pyrethrums, which came into bloom on the 3rd of May, gratified me by being a sweet bright pink thing. These are such nice, wholesome, hearty, thoroughly satisfactory plants to grow from seed, going ahead steadily all through the winter in a cold frame, and turning out of their pots into the open ground without the slightest check when the time comes. They are like people with perfect digestions, and never sulk. I am racing to fill up gaps now before the dry weather sets in, and perennials turned out of pots come in very useful; they often seem to do much better than those planted the autumn before, but of course they expect attention in watering.

June

I do not know whether anyone has ever written a book entirely about smells; if not, and it remains to be done, the author has a happy task before him, for nothing is pleasanter than to work with ample material, and when some plants own no less than four separate and distinct scents—and to a finer nose than mine may have more yet—the subject, as far as they at least are concerned, cannot be said to lack scope. Which reflections were suggested to me in the dividing of my Abyssinian Primroses a day or two ago; for their roots where I cut them had the strongest possible odour of Coriander, while their blooms, as everyone knows, recall Cowslips and Chloral in equal proportion.

Anyone who prefers his sensations in advance, like forced fruits, may crush Pansies, which must be of dark colour, in his hand, and then thank me for a foretaste of the scent of ripe Mulberries. The two most potent odours—at opposite ends of the scale, now procurable in the oblong—are those of *Lilium rubellum* and of *Allium moly luteum*, the former a mixture of ambergris and honey-sweetness, the latter of carrion with onions. I really defy anyone to find me a nastier smell than this last. I have sought a dead cat

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and found *Arum dracunculus*, and have savoured *Stapelias*, likewise that fungus appropriately known in the vernacular as Stinkhorn; but I think the *Allium* taken at close quarters, and when even you are expecting its scent to please your nose, as its shiny heads of yolk-of-egg bloom do your eye, may claim precedence. By the way, this is my first trial of *Lilium rubellum*, and I recommend it to everyone who has not seen it, although, as I grew mine in a pot, I cannot answer for its out-of-door behaviour. It seemed very tractable, and made no objection to a soil composed chiefly of sandy leaf-mould with a little loam, which I thought suitable for it, considering its native habitat under Pines. It grows about seven inches high, according to my experience, and the flower, a pink trumpet bloom three inches long, which slightly reflexes the tips of its petals as it grows older, after the manner of a *Lapageria*, is very delightful both in colour—a soft rosy pink, nowhere near magenta—and fragrance. It would look sweetly pretty grown by the dozen in a pan, and I hope it will soon be cheaper, though even now it is not at all dear at the price I paid—9d. a bulb.

June

The oblong is now at its most delicious stage, as are most gardens in early June. The Apple and Pear blossom is over; alas! its snow and blushes were but evanescent, owing to a night's high wind; the Lilac, too, is gone, but the Laburnum holds on bravely, and has out-stayed its presumable admirer, if imitation be the test, *Thermopsis montana*. This perennial is, I think, a little overrated by several people who have praised it to me; its nice clear Laburnum-like upstanding yellow blooms are well enough, and its foliage is prettily cut, but its season of bloom seems very short. The white *Dictamnus Fraxinella* is in full tide; the pink or purplish one is not yet out. I like the airy orchidaceous lightness of *D. alba*'s blossoms on their spike, and it is certainly a plant to have, though I think it would not be interesting if too often repeated. The blue *Tradescantia* is very true and pure in colour, and the best of all the *Linarias*, *macedonia*, has colour on its horns and will soon be out. It has long spikes clothed with orange and yellow Snapdragon-like flowers, the thin tails of which colour first.

The earliest Rose to open here was *Gustave Regis*, one of the climbers in the

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row supported on those lop-sided and twiggy Ash stakes about which I so often grumble. The stakes had a fine crop of buds and leaves, but I rubbed them all off. What a beauty Gustave is ; but then one thinks each Rose as it comes the loveliest of its kind. It would be hard to beat him, though, for button-hole buds, and his great spread cream poppy-like open blooms are showy enough. The Himalayan Briar with its large white flowers is very lovely now ; so are the Rugosas, and a small dark-red China Rose, absolutely perfect in bud. The Pyrethrums I grew from seed have done very well ; they are fine large flowers—singles—in every shade, from white through good pinks to a deep crimson without any magenta in it, which I am sure is uncommon, and which we are hugging to ourselves in the hope is *new* ! What glory it would be for an oblong to produce something worth naming, though it is unwise to write about it, for "things one talks of never come true!" as we used to say in the nursery. I wonder if it ever will ! The fame one gets as a raiser of some lovely flower must be so very satisfying, better than that which accrues upon the painting of a beautiful picture, and akin to that of the



"GENERAL JACQUEMINOT"

June

writer of a successful book. Only one person can have your picture for his very own; thousands can possess and enjoy your book or your flower.

The curious change which good cultivation will often work in garden Pæonies is exemplified by one I have, which last year, when growing in poor dry soil and unhelpt by any attention, was of a papery texture of bloom and sickly pinkish-white in colour. Now, its ten blossoms in evidence are exactly the hue of a La France Rose, and it is very pretty. As I write, its beauty is menaced by the threatening fall of the Oblong Eden's Adam, insecurely poised upon a borrowed ladder, and occupied in oiling the American bug on the large Apple tree overhead. This kind of work, which I consider is what garden boys are made for, he thinks infinitely preferable to the planting and watering I represent to him as enjoyable labour. So true is it that the natural instinct of man, as unredeemed from the primæval sporting type, tends towards the destruction of something as recreation—better to bag American blight than nothing! Let us depart from such materialism and turn to a dear little colour-picture presenting itself in a spread

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of pink *Helianthemum*, at the back of which rises a blue *Geranium*, infinitely superior cousin, or it may be sister, to the wild *Geranium*, which grows well on the Mendips, and of the same exquisite veiny satiny blue, with double the size and vigour. It is like a *Salpiglossis* when you look close into the bloom, as far as colour perfectness goes.

I have had the *Fuchsias*—which occupy the bed on the shady side from which we have just removed the *Tulips*—put in in their pots this year. I read somewhere that they flower better so, and I was also influenced by the strongly-expressed recommendations of Adam, who has painful recollections of the labour involved in last autumn's lifting and potting of some thirty plants which had made the best of their opportunities of root production.

I wish *Clematises* were not so secretive about their ailments, and would allow someone to discover why they suddenly depart this life after their known inconsiderate fashion. Other plants bear their injuries and lesions for the most part commendably open to observation, so that it is not more difficult to decide what ails them than in the case of prehistoric man, in whose absence of clothing and other

June

affectations doctors must have had such delightful opportunities of easy diagnosis. Two of my best Clematis plants—supposed to be on their own roots too—have suddenly, utterly, and completely dissolved partnership with life; all over in the case of one, and half-way down as regards the other. One is on one side, and gets the morning sun, the other on the other, getting the ardent gentleman's attention in the afternoon; one was planted this spring and well mulched and watered, the other was put in last year, and has never had either office performed for it. I must own that the neglected party is that which has died altogether; but then it was only half the size of its travelling companion. This latter, which is *Patens hybrida*, has an enormous woolly bud in reserve, and I believe the youngster, which is immediately below the conjunction of life and death, may possibly be answerable for the withdrawal of sap and stamina from the top part of the plant, which executed the manœuvre of departure not gradually but in a single night; this is, however, pure conjecture.

VII

MY GREENHOUSE

THE small greenhouse I own is certainly a great convenience, and, as a rule, looks very pretty. It is especially gay just now with half-a-dozen really good Zonals in full bloom, a *Cereus*, such as we often see in cottage windows, covered with its great scarlet-rose blossoms full of glowing colour, a *Diplacus glutinosus* trained high over sticks, and a mass of orange yellow bloom, and various ferns and palms. But its vicissitudes have been many, and I fear such little houses as these are far more often a worry to their owners than a delight. In the first place, they are so difficult to manage in winter. Their small size—mine is only ten feet by eight—precludes a free circulation of air without draught, unless the heating apparatus is very carefully arranged—regardless of cost—and as carefully attended, and besides the initial expenditure, which in the case of a friend of mine who has

My Greenhouse

just had the very best boiler procurable fitted to her small house, came to about £12 or £15, pipes and all, there is the perpetual plague of stoking. A gardener who has nothing else to do, and the credit of the plants to maintain with his own, occasionally lets out the fire and otherwise commits himself in this respect : how much more the unwilling house-servant, male or female, obliged to turn out of a bitter night and use judgment in filling and banking up the fire ! One can do it oneself, certainly ; but when in bed with the resulting bronchitis, what becomes of the plants ? No, the game is not worth the candle. It is very nice to have hot-house flowers in winter, but where, as in my case, there is only one small greenhouse available, it is much better to sink ambition, and even to give up wasting money and fuel on keeping bedding plants through the winter. Such, at least, has been my conclusion, and I have now decided to have only a very few of the very best Zonal Pelargoniums—those which, like some I have mentioned in another place, are too good for the open ground—to bloom them through the summer for the sake of their gaiety, and to get them kept in a nurseryman's house

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through the winter, which will be easy enough. They will be the only things needing any heat, and for the rest, I am amassing a little collection of interests for the greenhouse, which, like the garden, is one of the oblong family, in the shape of a few hardy plants just too choice, dear, or difficult for the open garden. It is true, this latter will have no "bedders" in it for the future, unless I buy it some; but to do so would be cheaper than keeping heat for cuttings, etc., through the winter, and being worried with damping off, mildew, and the hundred and one bothers inseparable from the line of conduct I formerly pursued. I do not by any means wish to discourage people who like the triumph of pointing to a smart bed of zonals and saying, "There! I kept those all through the winter in my little house, with only an oil lamp," and I respect the painstaking way in which they trimmed that lamp and filled it daily—if they left it to servants it certainly smoked—because I have done it myself, and know how disagreeable it was in the doing. A Rippingille's radiating oil stove, as made in two sizes, one at, I think, about 30s., and the other at something like £3, I found answer as well as any

My Greenhouse

stove could possibly do ; they were successive purchases, the little one keeping the frost out quite well, and the bigger one, bought when its small brother wore out, easily keeping up 40° to 50° at night in the coldest weather. Some plants—the palms and even maiden-hair ferns included—kept at one end of the house, which is rather damp, got through the winter very well : they did not grow, but neither did the adiantums die down at all : zonals in the drier part damped off a good deal as to single leaves, but lived heartily enough *en bloc* : for all the bulbs I tried it was too hot, and made them lanky : the net result was that I lost little or nothing, but the plants looked rather miserable, old-maidy, lean, spindly, and sullen. Emphatically, it wasn't worth while. As for gas, which I once tried, it was a ghastly failure (no fun : serious, sad, and sober earnest). I am told there are gas apparatuses which succeed, but I never knew one personally. I am now going, some distance off, on the plan of the cold houses at Kew ; and a winter without fuss over any sort of lamp or fire will be real solace. Of course, in the blackest of frost, a night or two of the small Rippingille might be allowed. The

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plants for a house like this are, after all, just as numerous as for a warmed house, and quite as interesting, because so much more uncommon. I will append a list of what my house contains, and is destined to contain, for the sake of practicality ; and, in the meantime, I will mention a few of the prettiest things I have had under the new system up to the time of writing. In March and April then, the season for winter and spring crocuses being over, came, with other plants that are quite hardy, but whose flowers suffer from cold east winds and late frosts, often needing the protection of hand-lights in the open, *Shortia Galacifolia*, and the Abyssinian primrose, *Primula Verticillata*. *Shortia* is a tufty dwarf plant, with pretty wrinkled leaves, somewhat heart-shaped, and very delicate pinky-white blossoms, rather like very large wood-sorrel blooms in shape and habit. Its leaves are gaily tinted in the winter, and it takes to pot or pan life quite amiably, and can be increased by runners. I grow it in loam, with a little peat and sand added, and put it in a part of the house which only gets the sun for two hours of an afternoon. A great deal, of course, depends upon the amount of sun these little houses can get, but mine will serve

My Greenhouse

well enough as an average, since it is neither wholly sunny nor completely shaded. The sun falls upon it about 11 A.M., and is on it, more or less, until 4 P.M.; but it is fortunate in having a damp cool end which is only sunned for a very short time, and here I have my tiny collection of *Cypripediums*. To return to the plants first mentioned, the *Shortia* is ornamental all the year round and can, with the rest, be left in the house all the summer, provided that the door remains open so as to give perpetual air, or be summered in a frame, but if this latter plan is followed it must be well watered. Such of my hardy spring plants as are not ornamental after blooming, as the Indian azaleas, I turn out and either plunge in the ground, or put in an open frame, where they keep company with the dozen or so of chrysanthemums waiting to come into the house at blooming time. The Abyssinian primrose is exceedingly pretty, and, moreover, very sweet of scent. Its leaves and stems are most profusely covered with white powder, and the flowers are a lovely clear yellow and produced in great numbers. It is too delicate for the open ground, and is even rather unhappy in a cold house in winter, but if kept in the

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sunniest part survives with only the loss of its lower leaves, which are very prone to decay. As soon as its flowers are over, in May, it should be divided, and each tuft put in a separate five-inch pot, which it will soon fill. Auriculas, too, by the way, are famous plants for a little cold house, and I mention them here, though I do not grow them myself (owing merely to the unfortunate impossibility of having *everything* that can be grown in one wee house!), because they are in the way of the primula.

When the Azaleas, Indica and Mollis, come out, the little house is very pretty. The Indica azaleas are very uncertain about blooming regularly, and often fail to do so because they have suffered a little neglect—the very smallest as regards watering is enough—after their last season of flowering, and they are also apt to grow very straggly, with small unhappy-looking leaves: both they and the Mollis family must be turned out of the greenhouse into the open in June, and have sun and air above with plenty of moisture at the roots—a difficult combination—until the autumn, when they will need housing again, or rather, can be housed, for Mollis, at least, is perfectly hardy. Its blossoms,

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however, are so frail that they suffer terribly from wind in the open, and really last longer under glass. All seed vessels must be picked off, of course. I have found that *Azalea Indica* dies if turned out of its pot to grow altogether in the open ground, no matter how much care I take of it, if there is a dry summer: this year, up to the present, there has been plenty of rain, and my latest experiment looks like succeeding, for it is full of lusty shoots. All the hanging or creeping and dwarf *Campanulas* are suitable for cold houses. They do very nicely in pots, and in the case of the dwarfs, in big pans, and there are so many of them that it is easy to keep up a succession and plenty of variety, and they can be divided in autumn or early spring. The long hanging ones like *C. fragilis*, *C. Barrelieri*, and *C. garganica*, look very pretty in those orchid pots which are wider than, and not so deep as, ordinary pots; and they will hang over the front of the stage. *Campanulas isophylla* and *Carpatica* are charming in big pans, and come a little later, and *C. portenschlagiana*, which is always most brightly green and blooms very late, tufts over a pan in a very charming way.

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None of them, and indeed nothing else in the house, must be over-watered in winter, and they are all the better for a little weak decoction of cow manure once a week in spring and summer, when their pots are fairly full of roots. There is always plenty of stock for division when they are once established, and if they are not considered good enough, upon trial, for the house, a very fastidious person can always turn them out into the garden.

About July begins the busy time of potting and panning small bulbs for the late winter and early spring show. The number we can have is only bounded by the depth of our purse and the dimensions of the house, for the variety is very great. And I find it very delightful to get quite out of the beaten track here, and each year to try something new. Most of the bulbs can stay in their pans all the year round, spending the summer out of doors in some out-of-the-way corner to ripen : generally the coping-stone at the back of the South Africa bed receives them, and those which, like the Freesias, are not to be watered at all, are put by themselves. There are dozens of things which, like *Chionodoxa grandiflora*, are absurdly cheap and yet quite pretty enough for pan culture :

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there are also delightful little bulbs like some of the choicer *Erythroniums* (dog-tooth violets), which are too dear for the average gardener to put in his beds and leave to take their chance, and which, therefore, cry out for a pan life. The tiny, pretty, Hoop Petticoat *Narcissi*, the large family of the rarer *Crocuses*, which flower so early in the spring, or so belatedly in mid-winter, that their blossoms run terrible risks out of doors, and the pink and white squills that look nothing particular outside, but so dainty and sweet in a pot, all offer themselves : so do the lovely big snowdrops that always fill the ungardening mind with such surprise.

All the winter through there is the delight of going into the greenhouse to see how they are all getting on : then there are the pot violets, which are not difficult to manage if they have been properly potted in the first place (in September) in rich leaf-mouldy soil, and which seem so much more precious under glass, and certainly smell more sweetly ; and, of course, the hyacinths, which have only been left out before, because everybody knows all about them. Personally, I like my hyacinths in the open, where they grow such grand spikes, and more difficult

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things in pots: and with tulips I have never been successful as far as pot culture goes; like the hyacinths they are much finer and give much less trouble out of doors. Still, if you want early tulips, by all means crowd them by the dozen into rather shallow boxes of good soil and keep them in a sunny shelf of the house; you can take them up, bulb and all, to put in moss, or cut the flowers. I never omit to pot up some Roman hyacinths, however. Those I put in pots and plunged in a box of cocoa-fibre out of doors last August, flowered in early December; I brought them into the cold house in late October. I had no succession, and the one triumph of this extreme earliness was all my reward, so this year and for ever after I shall put in twelve bulbs, four in a pot, in the first week of each of the three months of August, September and October, and keep my pretty white bells dancing. There is no sweeter present than a pot of well-grown Roman hyacinths, nicely bedded in moss.

VIII

AND ITS PLANTS

AMONG the hardy plants which little green-houses may happily contain I have omitted the spiræas. There is a large family of these, but the man in the street—literally, when he sells them in the street—only knows *Spiræa Thunbergi*. This is the thing we have all bought in pots, deluged with water according to the florist's invariable advice, and thrown away when it went out of bloom, although it would have grown thoroughly well in a damp corner of the garden; and I know that I, for one, in my non-gardening days, believed that it comprised "spiræa" in its own self, and was quite ignorant of its very many brethren. A good many of them I have in the shady parts of the oblong, but our light soil is rather too dry for them: in the little greenhouse *Spiræa Frœbelli* is my favourite. It is a delicate little plant, delicate, that is, in the sense of daintiness, and well suited to pot life. Its pretty

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slender stems support long cut-edged leaves of a pale-green, powdered and variegated with white and pink, and though its flowers are nothing very particular, its foliage is quite enough to be a charm to the beholder. *Spiræa Japonica* Antony Waterer is another small-growing plant with pretty red flowers, which answers well for pots. There is a pink kind, *pal-mata*, which I have often seen advised for pots, but it is too large for wee houses, and grows perfectly well in the garden. In the house, *Spiræas* generally need annual repotting, in common with most of the other hardy things. Illiberality with this comforting process seems to be a rock on which numbers of lady gardeners split; I know very many who would do much better if they repotted their plants—at the proper time, of course—and recognised the necessity of admitting manure, other than that contained in tins and advertised as “clean,” as a necessary constituent of gardening success. I should not like to approach any subject likely to offend delicate susceptibilities, but in case I am doing so in mentioning this useful substance, I must remark, that for the true garden enthusiast, manure has no horrors. Certainly, the

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lady gardener, especially the one who wears gloves (a refinement I have never been able to acquire), can never be expected to attain the indifference which enables the jobbing gardener of a friend of mine to use his hands in preference to a sieve or riddle when mixing potting soil ; but, at least, a few years' experience of the honest-hearted growing of flowers for their own and their beauty's sake, will enable her, if she is in earnest, to regard it merely as a harmless means to an indispensable end. The worst of it is that there is so seldom any proper accommodation for either this or the heaps of loam and leaf-mould one requires in an oblong garden or its compeers. In ours, a very conveniently secluded site at the farther end, enclosed by a wall, railings, and a big syringa bush, is invaluable : apparently someone once intended setting up an arbour here, but got no further than a clearance of the site. It is always desirable, if possible, to keep the rain from stores of potting material, and in the end it is worth while, where no other convenient storage offers, to invest in a little wooden house for the purpose ; such little dens are sold, cheaply enough, for the use of amateur photographers and bicycle

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owners, and if painted dark green, are not specially unsightly, while it is the greatest convenience to have some place to put tools, hose and reel, wheel-barrow, etc. A wide shelf at high table height along one side will serve for potting on, and the soil, manure, etc., can be heaped underneath it. No floor but beaten earth is needed, and the front of the shed or house may quite well be left open, if it does not gape untidily in view.

Is not the essence of the garden-lover's lucubrations in digression? It would seem so, for one topic leads so swiftly to another, where there is such store of material in the way of interests, that I have wandered far away from my hardy greenhouse plants again. Of the fascinating *Cypripedium* then, let me discourse. Above all things I like a collection which can be made complete, and the impossibility of keeping pace with new issues, in plants as in stamps, would deter me from ever making a hobby, from a collecting point of view, of roses, carnations, or other floral fascinations. But of hardy lady's slippers the whole tale all told is not long. First and foremost, when you start your little collection, just enough for that shady shelf, I invite you to get *C. spectabile*. It is not

And Its Plants

the most uncommon, but it is undoubtedly the most lovely. Its pale ribbed green leaves, wrapping stalks of exactly the same tint, rise from "noses" concealed underground, almost exactly like those of the lily-of-the-valley ; and if you buy the mass of matted wiry roots, called a plant, in April, you can, before putting them in a pan of peaty soil, tell how many of these pinky beginnings there are. The Mocassin flowers are generally two on a stem, and are shaped as the rest of the family's blooms are, but of superior size to most. They are variable to a slight degree in colour, but mine are deliciously pink-white in suggestion, with a sunset flush and a deep rosy lip. I have the plant in a large, rather deep pan, and the surface of the soil is covered with sphagnum moss, occasionally renewed, which keeps up an even moisture. These plants love to be watered with a fine-rosed can, and they object to hot sunshine.

I have *C. pubescens* also, which is pale yellow and brown, *C. parviflorum*, a pretty yellow thing, *C. acaule* and *C. macranthum*, and there are two or three others of varied but always rare attraction. They may be left for some years in their pans, when once grown to a good size, but as a

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rule the rarer kinds are sold in small plants which should be shifted as soon as they finish flowering. The Sarracenias or Pitcher plants are another family, some of which are suitable for cold-house culture ; and those I have, *S. purpurea*, *S. flava* and *S. Drummondii*, are very interesting, as indeed are they all. The pitcher is in the leaf, curiously hollowed with an open mouth : these begin as little red points, desperately brittle, shooting like the roots of a double tooth turned upside down. They like sunshine, yet must never in the least be dry at the roots, and here the rose can come in again. The *Crinums* too are choice among cold-house beauties. Everyone knows that *Amaryllis* which is grown in warm greenhouses and has deep crimson flowers of glorious size and colour, but few people seem to know that several members of the family will grow nearly anywhere out of doors, while others are hardy with a little protection. The Guernsey and Belladonna lilies do well in a cold house, the latter blooming in September, and the Scarboro' lily can also be managed with tolerable ease, but *Crinum capense* gives absolutely no trouble, and has most beautiful heads of big pink flowers, while there is a white form,

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besides *C. Moorei*, and other varieties of the type. I have found, however, that it saves a great deal of worry and waiting to buy them started in pots, as dried bulbs are often very capricious about making roots, and very dilatory in the process. Any good nurseryman who makes a speciality of hardy plants and bulbs will send them out in pots, and this method of buying is infinitely more satisfactory, even when there is a long journey involved, than the parcel post system. The cleverness displayed by nurserymen in packing is astonishing. I have had small boxes, long and narrow in shape, from one celebrated nursery, which you would have sworn could not hold more than two or three six-inch pots at most; yet perhaps twelve or fifteen potted plants emerged not the least the worse, so cunningly had they been coaxed in and manœuvred with bast and moss for agents.

SUGGESTED COLLECTION OF PLANTS FOR A LITTLE COLD GREENHOUSE.

Sarracenia Flava.

„ *Drummondii*.

<i>Cypripedium pubescens</i> ,	} repot directly after flower-	
„ <i>spectabile</i> ,		ing if necessary.
„ <i>parviflorum</i> ,		

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Spiræa Froebelli.

„ *Bumalda* Antony Waterer, } repot in spring.
„ *Thunbergi*,

Diplacus Glutinosus.

A red and a white *Camellia*, { planted out against walls
if there is space.

Shortia Galacifolia.

Campanula Portenschlagiana,

C. Carpatica alba,

C. Garganica,

C. fragilis,

C. isophylla,

} divide in spring, suitable for fronts of stages.

Half-a-dozen foliage plants to place at the back of the stages: say a couple of palms, an *aspidistra*, an *Aralia Sieboldi*, *Hydrangea* Tom Hogg (with variegated leaves), *Podophyllum Emodii* (the Himalayan Duck's foot, large foliage, marbled and bronzed); *Clianthus puniceus*—the Glory pea, in a large pot has flowers like small red and black lobster claws: very showy and easy to manage.

Azalea Indica Pearl (or any others).

Azalea Mollis, one each apricot and reddish orange: keep out of doors from June to October.

A *Plumbago* (blue) to be grown in a large pot or planted out according to space. If grown in a pot, take a cutting every other year, and discard the plant when too large. The white form is not so floriferous, nor so showy. The blue is a most exquisite colour, and does perfectly well in a cold house.

Besides the above permanent residents there should be some few things which are taken in merely while flowering, and afterwards relegated to a frame, or the open garden. Of these are violets in

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pots, the fine large kinds such as the single Princess of Wales and La France, with Comte de Brazza, an old, but sweet, double white, and Mrs J. J. Astor, a very fragrant large flower. These are taken from the open ground and potted in the early part of September, and if kept moist and yet not too wet, generally succeed in pots, though they require a sunny position and firm potting. Then of double or single chrysanthemums we must have just two or three pots, the simplest way to manage them being to buy rooted cuttings in April, and keep them potted on all the summer, standing them first in the frame and later in the open. After flowering, the violets may be divided and planted in some quiet border to increase, or thrown away, and the chrysanthemums may be cut down close and relegated to the frame to afford cuttings from their new shoots, or likewise given the happy despatch, for the cuttings would need heat.

IX

JULY

IN those very frequent cases where the garden of a house lies in front of and behind the building, it is usual for one or other division to be more or less completely shaded, and this condition of things, which really makes for a pleasing variety, and should be taken full advantage of, often results merely in neglect for the shaded portion. Ferns, so commonly seen in small shady front gardens, are well enough in their way; but they are monotonous in colour all through the height of summer and autumn, and are, moreover, terrible snail and slug preserves. For the piece of ground which gets absolutely no sun whatever, they, with Creeping Jenny and Periwinkles, are perhaps necessary; but for that which receives even one hour's sunshine in the twenty-four there are much more attractive plants for a summer display. The Mossy Saxifrages enjoy such a

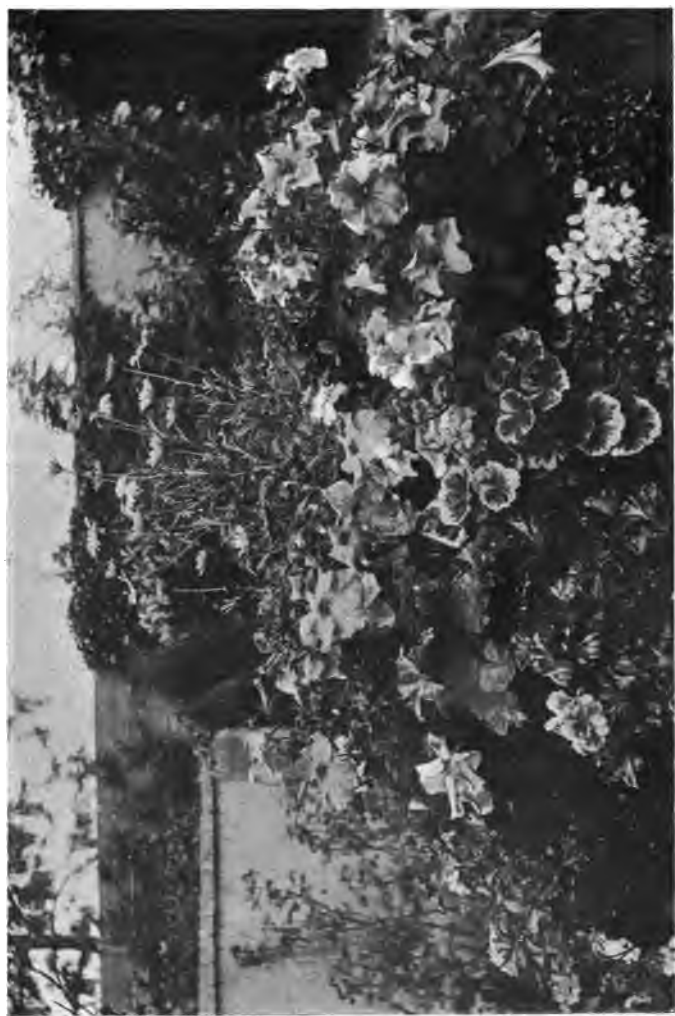
July

situation, and planted in variety about an edging of rather small rough stones soon form cushions, always green. *Saxifraga Wallacei* or *S. Camposi* are both suitable and bloom freely in spring, producing sheets of pretty white flowers on slender reddish stalks. For whole beds or inner edgings a very charming display can be made with Tufted Pansies. The more delicate and uncommon colours, such as lavender and cream, in Tufted Pansies, do not stand sun well, and a couple of hours of it in the day will be quite enough to keep them from growing weak and lanky. Four beds on my "shady side" are planted with Devonshire Cream, a lovely almost rayless flower of the colour its name suggests; William Niel, a pale Lilac of most exquisite hue; and in the two others the deeper mauve-yellow J. B. Riding and Lemon Queen make a most charming harmony. A round bed in the centre is either planted with single Begonias or with the white Tufted Pansy Countess of Hopetoun. Double Begonias are very beautiful, but expensive if erect-flowered varieties are purchased, while those which droop their heavy blooms are not effective. A centre bed with three Fuchsias in the middle and

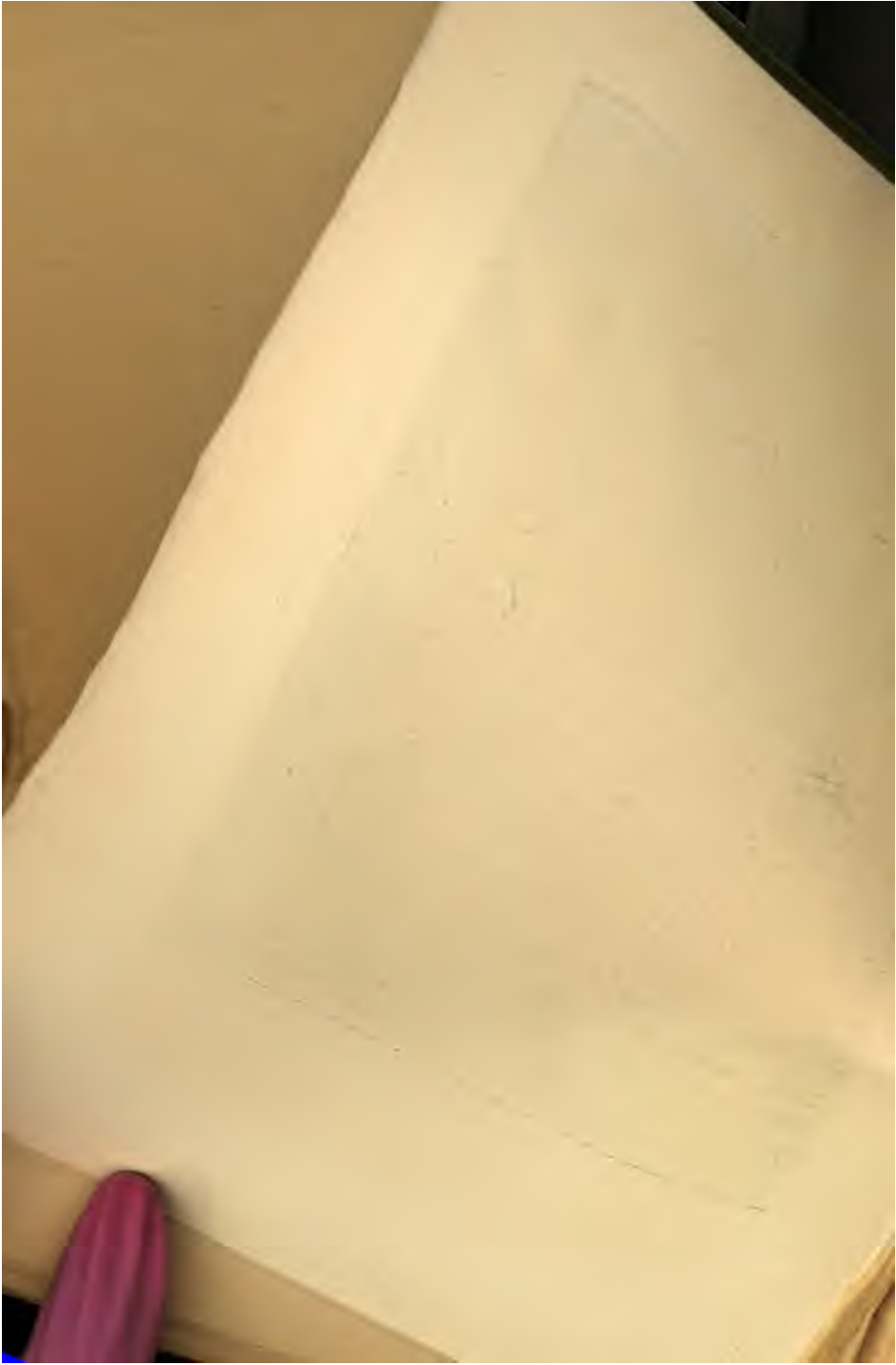
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single Begonias round is very showy ; and although it is the fashion to decry the big double flowering Fuchsias, they, with me at any rate, bloom profusely, and meet with far more admiration than the singles, while their rather tall growth renders them suitable for centres. The mauve and rose Phenomenal is, perhaps, the most showy, its two colours being delightfully assorted and very pleasing to the eye. They can be put out in the last week of April if the season be mild, and must be taken up before the first frost, when any cellar out of reach of frost will accommodate them. The best results for this sort of work will be had from Begonias planted out in the bed in early April, not having been previously encouraged to make growth. They will be a little behind those which were placed in warmth earlier, but will give more and finer blooms. Both they and the Fuchsias greatly enjoy an overhead sprinkling with tepid rain water every evening in hot weather, and a surface dressing of guano two or three times in a season will keep them going very merrily.

Viola cornuta, easily raised in great variety from good seed, makes an interesting edging plant, and of Lilies, of



SUMMER BEDDING-OUT



July

course, there is no stint, very many of this family enjoying partial shade. These will be found most useful for the narrow beds bordering most little gardens, and look best planted in groups of three of a sort, while it is well worth while to invest in a little special soil for them, and to take the precaution of filling the scales of each bulb with sharp sand, with which the bulbs may be surrounded, this preventing their rotting in the winter. Not half enough use is made by amateurs of Lilies. They are very cheap and excel in beauty and scent, while, once established, they give no trouble beyond an occasional top-dressing. The pure white, pink-spotted, and red-spotted lancifolium or speciosum Lilies are particularly hardy and good. The longiflorum Lilies, hardly ever seen out of pots, are grand border flowers. *Lilium Browni*, with a massive trumpet, reddish-chocolate outside and white within, is exquisite and easy of culture, while the Panther Lilies, *L. pardalinum*, will do well if the ground is deeply dug to receive them. The Turk's-Cap and Tiger, and the summer Orange Lilies of various kinds—*croceum*, *davuricum*, etc.—require more sunshine, and are not suitable for our present purpose. In spring, and,

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indeed, well into summer, and certainly again in autumn, we cannot do without coloured Primroses in the shady garden. These flowers suffer terribly from hot sunshine, though they like a glint of it at early morning or towards evening, and in the shady garden, where the soil is sweet and good, they will do wonders. The blue Primroses have been accused of not being sufficiently showy to vie with the highly-coloured and other gay strains; but they are very sweet and tender in colour, and though only a proportion of them comes blue, it is worth while to sow several packets with the chance of getting a few plants of the one shade of exquisite Cambridge-blue which sometimes rewards us among darker blues and violets, with a number of reds.

It is an excellent rule, though I believe it has not yet been officially formulated as one of the statutes of the English law, that one should not make quotations, however hackneyed, without knowing whence they come, and the whole of their immediate context. Nevertheless, I will venture to say that June and July are really the "sweet o' the year" in the Oblong, whatever stretch of time the author of the expression meant it to com-

July

prise. Come with me on this day of sunshine after rain for a walk round the Oblong—that is, if you are strong of ankle, for when remaking the paths the *entrepreneur*, who was doing it “on his own” without supervision, and, I presume, by contract, found himself short of small binding gravel, and left the bigger part of the Berkshire stuff much too hard ever to wear down, loose on the top of the path nearest the house. Such defects as these, costing for their reparation as much as would buy half a border of plants, get left behind indefinitely in the struggle among deserving garden objects for control of the purse. Well, then, we first of all come to the Sweetbriar bush. Such a common thing, but oh! such a lovely one. Last year it was fat and dumpy from close pruning before I had it, and it was full of small wood, and too busy flowering on it to do more than throw up one tremendous shoot from its very middle. This grew up like a fishing rod, about 10 feet high, and in February began to droop at the tip. Then I pulled it over and tied it down in an arch, and now there are flowering twigs starting from every point upwards, and the bush is sending up another rod on the further

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side, which will form a second arch there, and soon I hope arches *ad infinitum* or *ad murum*, for there is the sunny side wall to stop them and merge them into a Wistaria. Here comes in the advantage of having neighbours. The Wistaria, which is trained along a wire on the top of the wall, grows nominally in the next garden, but prefers our warmer side, and gave us all its lovely droops of bloom, which somebody—not Adam this time—*will* call peach-coloured. Why? It is correct draper language, I know, but the original draper was, perhaps, imperfectly acquainted with Peaches, ripe or in the blossom stage, and incorrectly supposed them to be mauve. The spread of luxury, however, must have taught everybody by this time that Peaches have nothing to do with lilac or mauve or any colour at all like Wistaria hue! Under the Wistaria wreaths grows the glossy Escallonia rubra, at its loveliest now, with little bright deep coral-pink bells studding its neat well-groomed foliage. It is the particular object of that desire of attack lurking in every ungardener-born male possessed of a *sécateur* as Adam unfortunately is, and its luxuriance, encroaching somewhat on a rather insignificant little bit of rockery

July

made for *Sempervivums* in this hot corner, is occasion for much contrary speaking. "It shall, must, ought to be cut." "It shall not, must not, and *will not* be cut," and another pair than you and I, reader, might be speeding in different directions, instead of wending amicably on, as I trust we now shall, together. The next pretty thing to be seen is the Lady Caroline Nevill Clematis on the arch over the path ; it has, I do believe, made up its mind, as far as Clematis nature will permit it, to live. It has a great hanging bunch of blooms all clustered together half-way up the arch, which from a distance looks as if some one had made a bouquet and stuck it there. Close by is a deep purple Geranium, which throws up Lady Caroline rarely, and next is a little space where *Watsonias* ought to be coming up through a cushion of Saxifrage. By the way, I sowed a box of Saxifrage, and pricked out little tufts in different places where they were wanted in the spring, and now they are big enough to declare their true character. Every one is alike ! I hoped to have had varieties, as the packet (a bought one) was "mixed." Seed sowing is a delightful pursuit, with the necessary spice of lottery that all our

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best amusements have, but it can't be done to advantage in a little garden, where there is no space for experimental planting. Apropos of this, I have seven boxes of German Pansy seedlings of different choice kinds crying out to be forwarded in life, and space to put out about four plants! The only answer to this conundrum is, more garden, and I think I must hire a little bit of nursery bedding across the road—if I can.

To return to our survey, past some single Pæonies just opening their petals to show us the gold all in filigree they hold within, and some bold red and yellow Gaillardias; past a number of interesting undeveloped things, which as yet, like children, are only interesting to their possessor, and we come to Edelweiss, its flannel flowers in the sun and its roots nicely tucked up in its stones; it is sharing a small rockery with some Calochorti and Brodiaëas; when the latter will finish making stalk I can't think; up and up they go, and the deep crimson creeps from the stalk end of the green bud to its tip. On the wall behind this little holding are two old Roses, a *Devoniensis*, most particularly good this year, deep in colour, and full of bloom, and a sweet old cabbagey

July

red garden Rose, whose name I do not know. In front of them is the blue *Tradescantia*, which is just now covered, as to its sword-shaped leaves, with trickles of rain water dyed deep indigo blue by its soaked buds. The expanded flowers resist the rain, but the young buds give themselves up to it, and melt away in colour. The white *Spiderwort* is on the other and more shady side, and though the blue is beautiful in form and colour, and everybody who sees it appears to be enjoying that pleasure for the first time, as it is uncommon about here, I think the hothouse purity of the white is even more charming. I have not the purple form, but I do not like its colour so well as either of these. Passing the Violet bed, where the leaves are nearly as big as those of *Aristolochia Siphon*, the *Azaleas*, turning ruddy already, and some tall *Lilies* of sorts still in mufti, I ask you to admire the old red China Roses and the new hybrid China Teas, of which I have made a massed bed at the Oblong's end. Are they not wonderful in bloom? As if someone had been pelting the bushes with armfuls of Roses; a carnival of blush and royal crimson. These latter, though, do not stand the rain well. Their heads

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grow so heavy and droop quite down to the ground, and the next day the sun scorches up all the water they hold, and themselves with it, and they become dreary, drabby ghosts of red Roses. There is a great blue Lupin standing sentry at the far corner of this bed; its towering spikes of azure—real Italy sky-colour—will last until the Delphiniums are out. Of these, only little jewelled Belladonna has come so far; she (such a dainty thing must be feminine) is in colour like turquoise as I once saw it in its matrix, just as they find it.

X

AUGUST

THE great green pods of *Lilium auratum* buds are transparently showing distinct traces of the spots that will presently embellish them when they turn white and open. The *speciosums*, which are with the *auratums* in pots in the little greenhouse, are far in advance of those in the open, although they have not so much of the actual sun, to which *speciosums* do not seem to object. All the books tell us to turn the Lilies in pots out of doors during the months of June and July, but I find that they do very much better with me in the greenhouse, where, to be sure, the door is wide open night and day, but where they get no battering from wind or heavy rain, and no scorching, by reason of the thin blind used to keep the sun off zonal *Geraniums*. They are sturdier and look more full of life and sap than those outside, which latter, however, are quite healthy. Some are planted in the shady

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border, some in the sunny one, and there is not the least difference between them in size or health. Lilies are, for the most part, such cantankerous beings that I wasted but little money on them last year, and bought only a dozen mixed and named ones from a nurseryman, and some of the very cheap ones advertised late, besides a few auction lots. One of the latter, a dozen, I bought hoping for the red *L. pyrenaicum*, but it turned out to be the ordinary yellow form instead. Their small, pert, greenish-yellow turbans, profusely speckled with black, were produced in fair quantity, two to four on a stem, which I thought good for the first year, and they did not smell very badly, the odour was only somewhat rank. We thought them too fugacious to be of superlative merit, but weirdly pretty in their own way, and their well-clothed stems do not lose their leaves or hang out yellow streamers of withered distress as some other Lilies do, but are still bravely green two months after their flowering time, for they were gay in April's end.

The very cheap Lilies—all small, but sound bulbs—consisted of *speciosums* and a few *longiflorums*, with which I had a mind to experiment. About three-fourths

August

of them have come up well in the border, and with one and two buds to each of the longiflorums, and two to five on the speciosums, but these latter are small—not above a foot high. The Nankeen Lilies, which bloomed well last year (*L. testaceum*), are coming on fast and full of buds; so are some speciosum roseum, which were planted late in the spring of 1899, and consequently had their belated buds killed by cold and damp in October. Of the dozen mixed (named) from a good grower, rubellum flowered well—a single bloom, I do not know whether it ever has more to a bulb—in a pot. Auratum and *A. macranthum* are evidently intending to oblige, also in pots, with respectively four and three blooms. Croceum, added to a group of five other bulbs, has been glorious, and carried twenty-seven blossoms. Davuricum has not bloomed, but looks healthy. A couple of big bulbs of speciosum are most promisingly full of bud. Browni, in company with four others, bloomed well with two flowers, two of its companions (auction bulbs) failing altogether, and two doing well, with one flower and two respectively. What the remainder of the dozen were I have completely forgotten,

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and their labels cannot be found. I believe one was *testaceum*; if so, it is blind, and there are several healthy spikes of another I do not recognise showing. My dozen of *tigrinum superbum* are full of buds, but shabby about their ankles, owing, I think, to heat and drought after a great deal of rain earlier. The nice planting of *pardalinum*, in which I so prided myself, is a complete failure—everyone blind, though quite green and gay. So much for Lily prospects; on the whole, I may claim that they do well here, though I have failed to obtain even a nose above the ground from *chalcedonicum* for four years and four distinct bulbs. My Fortin's Lilies-of-the-Valley bloomed nicely, and I have been going about in vast contempt of the ordinary variety ever since, and urging my gardening friends to root up all their old-established and often thoroughly dwindled plantations and try these big beauties. They are exactly double the size, so far as the individual blossom goes, of the old form, and have quite as many, or more, bells to the spike, while they smell just as sweetly.

I went to see my particular nurseryman the other day, partly with the intention of

August

remonstrating on my acquisition of the purple pink tall *Asclepias incarnata*, which is a poor, dingy thing, instead of the pretty orange *A. tuberosa*, which is only half the height, and has flowers which are most attractive in colour, and partly to see if he had anything tempting among his herbageous plants now in bloom. Quite disarmed by the promise of the right *Asclepias* later, I was delighted to find we had effectually skimmed the cream of the collection last year, but there were one or two things I must decidedly add to the Oblong. One was a new hybrid *Chelone*, in every way better than the pretty bright *C. barbata*, which I have always admired for its *Pentstemon*-like red bells, and another a scarlet *Delphinium*, of the same colour as *nudicaule*, but with wider-mouthed flowers that are larger, more prettily shaped, and altogether more charming. It is *D. cardinale*, but certainly an improved form on any I have seen.

The Globe Thistles were a picture of glory, with small tortoiseshell butterflies in crowds on and around them. *Echinops ruthenicus* certainly ought to be grown by all bee lovers, for besides the butterflies—is it Artemus Ward who says the proper word is undoubtedly flutter-byes, and the usual

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version is a corruption?—hosts of bees, tame, wild, and of the bumble persuasion, were in attendance on them. I have none of these Thistles in the Oblong, as I fancied them unsuitable for so small a garden; but I think one at least must be imported, in order that we may enjoy more butterfly company than at present. As to bees, we are bombarded with them as it is, several neighbours being apiarian enthusiasts. I have a grudge against them, for in their officious industry they certainly curtail the beauty of my blossoms very greatly. The unfertilised flower, hoping against hope, hangs out its allurements for days after that which has been visited by a bee is faded and gone, and I have no desire for home-saved seeds.

All things, even Water Lilies, come to him who waits, but they are by no means always a sufficient recompense in themselves for the time and trouble expended in waiting up to date. This is a gratuitous grumble, merely induced by the present heat, which acidifies pen and ink as it sours cream, for I have no cause to complain of my Nymphæas; they are all I hoped or expected. Laydekeri rosea is a sweet little flower, a white Water Lily in miniature as to shape but a little more

August

cupped, and with rather more pointed petals ; it is two inches across, of a really pretty pink, which becomes deeper as the blossom ages, and with a delicious crowd of yellow stamens at its heart. Its little yellow companion is a reproduction, a shade smaller, in cream and yellow, and opinions are divided as to which takes the *pas* for beauty. On the whole, I would give it to the pink for rarity, seeing that it cost more than double the price of the other. Each will have five or six blossoms at least, and the heart-shaped leaves, which are bronze-tinted in *Helveola's* case and green in that of *Laydekeri*, are very fascinating. They are well worth the trouble of preparing and sinking the tubs and the splashy job of planting. We run fresh water through every day or two by means of a hose and one foot of lead piping connecting the two tubs, with another bit to carry the waste into a drain, and I have some small gold fish in either barrel, which so far have done no harm and look pretty. The Lilies, like certain Oxalises, *O. lobata* in particular, require plenty of sleep, and might form part of floral clocks so regularly do they retire to rest about four or five o'clock in the afternoon, while they

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are not enamoured of the virtue of early rising.

Having chronicled a success in the Nymphæas, let me now record several disappointments. The first is not the least disagreeable because it is my own fault. I put out a nice box of *Nemesia strumosa* Suttoni too far apart, and the plants have grown but little and are quite a failure. A friend who professes complete success says she turned hers out of pots in clumps, and that they grow much better so; this plan I will try another year, for the colouring of this annual is very striking, though the individual blossoms, rather like tiny wider open Pentstemons, are somewhat insignificant.

Annoyance No. 2 was prepared for me by the new-fangled *Eschscholtzias*, pink and double white, which I grew in place of the grand old Mandarin. The double white came up faint primrose colour, and about one in ten has a few extra petals; the blooms of both varieties are a great deal smaller than our old "Nightcap" friend. The seed came from abroad and, it may be, is not good, though it certainly was not cheap. Then nearly all my *Viola cornuta* came yellow, and not horned, but with little ugly flowers like

August

wild Pansies, and only half-a-dozen or so of the nice healthy clumps have those pretty little hovering-butterfly horned blooms of blue and white that I wanted. Then my *Alstroemerias* have nearly all turned out to be of the pinky apricot hue, speckled with brown and orange, which is very pretty but not nearly so glorious as the yellow, which I ordered in equal quantities. Some of the bulbs came from Holland and some from a local source, so I suppose the pinky one is easier to raise. But all sorrow was forgotten when some long, tapering, ridged green buds began to open among the *Azalea* bushes, and after a few days' eager anticipation a lordly clump of *Lilium Browni* appeared in the full sweetness of their splendid trumpets, the thick petals so snowy white within, and having such a delicate fresh scent. The *Lilium croceum* have done well, too, and one spike had twenty-eight fine blooms on it. The Tiger Lilies (*splendens*) intend to reward me, I think, but, alas! the *pardalinums* seem all blind. I suppose I may expect such a result the first year. *Erigeron speciosus superbus* is the showiest thing in the garden just now. It blossoms, like *Michaelmas* Daisies, in a perfect flurry of joy at its

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own gay lilac, yellow-centred beauty, and its slim stalks, big flowers, and feathery petals combine into a thing of supreme grace. It is as useful as it is ornamental, for a better lasting flower for cutting hardly exists, and it has such a long season of bloom, if relieved of its fading flowers. It certainly deserves a place under the heading A1.

Anthemis tinctoria—a good form which is not universal—is close by, and very gay, too, about half the height of the *Stenactis* (*Erigeron*), and contrasting boldly with it. These yellow, Daisy-like flowers last well though they are a trifle stiff, and the ferny foliage is useful. *Oenothera Youngii* is very attractive with its myriad little clear yellow, red-stemmed flowers, and it is a tidy plant, doing its seeding neatly, which commendation cannot possibly be extended to the Canterbury Bells hard by, whose obtrusive brown cast-offs give me several minutes' work of removal daily. I have come to the reluctant conclusion that I must try to do without Carnations. They have exhausted every excuse for dying, and finally proceeded to depart without any attempt at excuse, and I have only two large veterans left out of two or three dozen younger plants. Here they exist

August

through the winter sullenly enough, and go off when the dry heat comes. But the old Crimson Clove lives and flourishes, and one or two out of ten varieties of Pinks planted do well, so the known vagaries of the family are again exemplified.

This is the season of the ever-recurring struggle with the water companies, who, after their usual engaging manner, have first accepted extra payment for a hose and then desire us not to use it, and, for a considerable part of the day, effectually prevent our doing so by cutting off the water. When I reflect how it rained in the spring, and, indeed, until quite recently; how in every mouth the statement was found "Well, we shall not be short of water *this summer*, at any rate"; and how we cheered ourselves under the cold grey skies with the pleasing prospect of eventually getting our money's worth and peace withal; the exhortations of the water man, bent on our only using a tap which entails an extra 100 feet of pipe, and provides no pressure to speak of, and will not reach the end of the garden at all, are seed thrown upon very unpropitious soil.

XI

SEPTEMBER

THE first of the Michaelmas Daisies in the Oblong began to bloom the second week in August, and now they are all brisking up, and many of them are charily sending out an advance of blossom or two to feel the weather. I rather think that if I might grow but one hardy perennial the Aster would have it. The family is so delightfully varied, and all its members are so kindly, so willing to do their best whatever their drawbacks, and so indifferent to all evils that other things resent. I saw a few days ago a group of *A. Thompsoni*, which the owner assured me had been blooming for months past. He is enthusiastic, as well he may be, over a lordly garden, the most delightful part of which, to my taste, is the huge kitchen garden, all spread level to the sun, where espalier-trained Roses and fruit trees enclose the vegetables, and are fronted by wide borders along the paths rich in every imaginable flower beauty.

September

The aster was still in full bloom of lusty lilac-purple, and looked like growing on until frost should fall upon it and send it to sleep. From this, one of the most valuable plants I know, to the glorious masses of five feet feather and foam in every shade of mauve and purple, in pearly white, pink, and rose, that will come later, there is almost endless choice, and such easy propagation. I wanted to fill up three or four bare spaces in the borders, and sent a few days ago for Michaelmas Daisies in pots for this purpose; they were in full bud, but took not the smallest heed of their change of quarters when turned out, and with good mulching and watering mean to flower exactly as if they had never been disturbed. The proportion of these plants to others in the Oblong is too great, but I often have serious thoughts of making it still greater by sacrificing a bit of the grass—where the dogs do most villainously and persistently bury their bones and excavate their catacombs—to an extra Aster bed. Meanwhile, the varieties I own are Coombe Fishacre, Ceres, *A. bessarabicus major*—a new acquisition by emulation—*A. dumosus*, a most manful little eighteen-inch bush, round, compact, and

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coated with a sheet of small mauve flowers for many weeks at a stretch ; Leda, Pleiad, Ianthe, *A. grandiflorus*, Esmé, *cordifolius*, Diana, *lævis floribundus*, Novi-Belgi Daphne, *Novæ-Angliæ ruber*, with distinct foliage, *A. acris*, and about five others, the names of which have been lost. This is, I know, a most heterogeneous, and, probably in some respects, badly-chosen collection ; those which were not gifts, as the best ones were, having been more or less casually introduced ; but they are all charming in their several ways.

The big branch which broke off my tree Pæony in May, and which I stuck in at random beside it, has rooted, and is a thriving plant, although it has had no care or watering ; a lucky chance this. Next to it is *Clematis Davidiana* in full flower. When this first began to push out solitary single blossoms at the axils of its rather coarse leaves I thought little of it, and wondered that good writers praised it so ; but, as presently, it took to showing a whole bunch of the flowers, which are individually exactly the colour and shape of a pale porcelain blue single Hyacinth Bell, and the size of the bells of Grand Lilas, I felt the spell and the charm.



TULIPS IN A VASE

September

The first instalment of the Oblong's modest bulb order has just come and been potted, or rather panned. As so many things die and rot away in our wet mild winters, I am trying some Crocuses—*imperati*, *ancyrensis*, *aureus*, *sulphureus pallidus*, *banaticus*, *Tommasinianus*, *zonatus*, and *Sieberi*—in pans of twelve or twenty-five bulbs. The pans themselves are very attractive, and several people who saw them, newly arrived from the local pottery, coveted them. They had to be made to order, for no shop in our town could supply them, and for 9s. I got fifteen in two sizes, 12 inches and 15 inches across and $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. For some reason the bigger ones look shallower than their smaller brethren, although all are identical in this respect. The filled pans are standing outside at present, and will be moved into the cold greenhouse later on, to flower unmolested by snow, rain, or tearing winds. I have also planted *Erythroniums Hendersoni*, *Hartwegii*, and the lovely pink *Johnsoni* in the smaller pans, with *Tecophylæa cyanocrocus*, *Merendera*, and some *Fritillaries* in pots, so I hope for interests in winter and early spring. The ordinary run of garden bulbs must wait until next month. The garden

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has only had two gifts from this batch, some Snowdrops, Whittalli and robustus, and a planting of *Triteleias* that are so amiable and grow anywhere. Against the advice of several people who, so far, have always proved right, I have planted a root of *Ostrowskia magnifica*, the huge glorious Bellflower giant, and a quaint-looking thing it was, like an imitation Horseradish made in brown candy. Of course, I must not expect it to grow, unsatisfactory as it is, under far more favourable conditions in most cases, but there is, I suppose, the thousandth part of a chance of its benignancy, and my *Polygonum baldschuanicum*, only planted last autumn, is in bud. So it is evident that strange and charming things do at times happen in gardens to undeserving, ignorant, and obstinate folk. As a set off, my *Incarvillea Delavayi*, that I wished so much to see, has quite refused to oblige, except with a considerable growth of leafage, very attractive to slugs. I do not think they ate its buds, however, so that is not the cause for its ungenial attitude.

I am going to plant some flowering shrubs, out of pots, about the Oblong lawn. Adam raises the objection that mowing will thereby be impeded, but as

September

he has of late delegated this sacred duty to the pony boy, any addition to whose far from onerous work is welcomed, the appeal falls flat. Probably some of the shrubs will do likewise, the difficulty of establishing things of any size in this soil always presenting itself, and for this reason they are to be purchased in pots, so that they may get an early start. This is the selection, governed to some extent by what can be conveniently obtained, and also by the small space available: *Magnolia stellata*, *Calycanthus floridus*, *Cornus mas*, *Daphne Mezereum*, *Diplopappus chrysophyllus*, *Exochorda grandiflora*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Prunus Pissardi*, *Rhus cotinus*, *Olearia Haasti*, *Spiræa prunifolia* fl.-pl., *Skimmia*, *Camellia*, and *Weigela* Eva Rathke. I am asking advice on this programme—but not on the lines of that invariably proffered, asked or unasked—the latter usually—by Adam. His formula is “Leave it alone,” and that no real gardener ought to be able to do when “it” is bare and flowerless to begin with.

XII

OCTOBER

IN reference to the ingratitude of Carnations and their refusal to do well in the oblong, I have been advised to try growing them from seed, and that the recommendation is sound is exemplified by the success of some of the French market Carnations—after the manner of C. Marguérite, but finer—which I grew from seed and planted on the top of a tool shed shored up by a bit of rough mortarless wall. Over and over again I have planted “bought” Marguérite and Grenadin Carnations—I am particularly fond of the latter little perky scarlet flowers—in vain, but these seedlings are very lusty, although in a baked and dry position. But there is a great objection to growing anything from seed in an oblong—want of space. Carnations of the border variety, no matter how good the seed, must throw a certain proportion of worthless flowers, and these,

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until they are proved Ishmaels, take up as much space individually as the others.

It is possible, certainly, to guard against gaps to some extent by only pricking out the later and weaker and invariably best seedlings, and throwing away the sturdy aggressives, which are likely to turn out single, but in any case there is a very long period of anticipatory flowerlessness, which means extravagance of space in such a garden as this. I have secured the little bit of temporary "trial ground" or nursery bed across the road, but it is filled with Pansies, in which I was much interested last year. Another season I may devote it to Carnations, after which, tiresome as they are, I am seized with a periodical hankering. The old Crimson Clove, now a big and most prosperous clump, is planted in poor dry soil close to the gravel path, from which it is divided by a few flat stones. It is scorched all day by a glaring sun—the power of the potentate's rays in these parts and on this basking hillside is something tremendous, and his presence has been fairly constant, save for three or four dull weeks in late July and early August—never gets any water or attention, and bloomed most profusely, the flowers fine in size and colour, yet some

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Pinks close by are feeble and quite unresponsive, and so are others planted in the best soil the oblong can afford.

The last few days have been devoted to the delightful task of making, and planning for, some new beds to be filled with the best forms of certain perennials only. In many small gardens there is a tendency to repetition, which is somewhat aggravating, and although it may seem a pity when a big clump of *Helianthus* or *Aster* has to be divided, not to plant it about in various parts of the garden, doing so by no means adds to the interest of the borders. I have therefore made myself a rule that not more than three of any plant of tolerable size is, or are, allowable, and that in every case the three are to be planted together. I know a garden where there is a fine form of blue *Campanula*, which I take to be *grandis*; it is dotted about in some twenty large clumps all over the same demesne, and the effect is wearisome in the extreme. Here comes in the beauty and excellence of the exchange. When my plants arrive as a whole at the stage of over-size I shall insert in *The Garden* an advertisement—"So many (named) perennials to exchange for such and such," and I wish some other folk

October

with what I call "intelligent" gardens would do the same! In these parts things take so long to establish and increase so slowly, owing, I suppose, to the burnt brick consistence of the soil all through the ordinary summer, that my advertisement will not be due just yet. The only exceptions to the rule of slow increase are the Violas, which it will evidently be necessary to replant yearly. Both in the sunny and shady sides they have flowered the whole summer through, and are still hard at it with no diminution of size and vigour, but a trifle too much stalk. They have had two top-dressings, roughly shaken over them, so that some of the growths were buried, of pulverised cow manure and soil, but those on the sunny side have never been watered. The others get a drink when the Fuchsias are being hosed, as their beds adjoin each other, but there is nothing to choose between the two sets in the matter of health. I am very fond of lilac, clear yellow, and pale blue Violas, and mine are all of these colours and of the newer sorts, except the elderly but unsurpassable Ardwell Gem.

In the very middle of the oblong's lawn there has always been a spot some two yards wide, where the grass looked measly and

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refused to colour properly. In an access of bold resolution I lately summoned a jobbing gardener, one of that evil species whose presence is taboo in the oblong, except for operations of this nature, and had the locale explored, with the result that half a cartload of rather nice rockery stones was disinterred from six inches or so beneath the surface. The job of removing these to a more suitable site did not commend itself to the genius of the spade, who, in common with his kind, prefers the fork and secateur to other implements, so he precipitately left to continue "tidying up" somewhere else. I shall have the stones tidied up into a small rockery for *Calochorti*, which I find do best here if planted in six inches or eight inches of sandy soil spread on the existing surface and upheld by a few stones. Some of Mr Perry's new *Calochorti* are most winsome and splendid in size, with all the subdued beauty of rather weird colouring which distinguishes the race, and of these I am ambitious.

XIII

NOVEMBER

THE sunny wall in the Oblong is making a fair autumn show. Everything was so late in the cold spring that the first frosts will find a good many plants at their best, I fear. But we often get well through November without being subjected to worse than a mild hoar frost, which hardly touches this wall. One pretty bit of it is that where on one side of the small buttress a Banksian Rose is growing and putting up its fresh green shoots, and on the other is a mass of *Polygonum baldshuanicum* growing up a high-branched bean-stick and falling over on to a bush of *Aster cordifolius* Diana. The pale foamy mauve of the Aster, the faint pink dropping surf of the Polygonum, and the varied cool tints of Banksian and grey wall make up a charming bit of tinting, backed as it is by a thriving *Maurandya Barclayana* on the wall. When the cordifolius Asters were beginning to show

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flower we despised them for the smallness of the first scattered blossoms, but now they are fully out admiration is compelled.

What a delightful, and oh! what a tiring month is this. The aching back, gritty hands, and rheumatic knees of the worker who has been for two entire days "grubbing"—to use one of Adam's favourite expressions—bear witness to a few hundreds of bulbs planted, a long row of double red Daisies, which had grown matted, divided and replanted as edging, and a large consignment of new perennials accommodated with the soils and situations they like best, at no sparing of trouble, not to speak of Chrysanthemums shifted under the little greenhouse's glass, and tidily arranged there. The red Daisies were originally planted inside the box edging all down the sunny border; here they bitterly resented the summer baking, although they spread and grew in the winter and spring. Some of them had, however, been partly shaded by an Apple tree, and when they came up the difference in size and vigour between these and the others was most marked in favour of the shaded growers.

Adam is elated about a discovery he has lately made in entomology, which, if

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not exactly a secret from Darwin, is, I fancy, not a matter of common knowledge. I am not sure, by the way, whether the common or garden worm is included in entomology; if it is not I beg the pardon of all who may feel annoyed or offended by the error. Insect or not, the rather small red worm that fishermen, I believe, call the brandling, and which is of a slimmer figure and livelier red hue than the ordinary garden worm, abounds in our manure heap, which occupies a corner of the Oblong, discreetly screened by a large Syringa bush and the Apple tree at the end of the Violet bed. Adam, repairing hither with his slugging lantern after dusk, was interested to find a number of brandlings, individuals three inches or four inches long, disporting about the trunk of the Apple tree, some of them six feet up it, and able to make ascent with perfect ease. What a pity Robin—who had been my companion all day to little purpose, since I was only planting small bulbs and not going deep enough for many worms to be disturbed—was in bed and asleep; he lost a precious opportunity.

The slug plague has been very marked of late. This virulent incubus of all small gardens has a double opportunity to infest

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the Oblong, because one of the adjoining gardens is unoccupied, and no one there goes out to invite permanent guests into a salt jar, while the other neighbouring parterre does not offer much attraction, being devoid of the tenderness and succulence of the newly-planted or choice seedling, and occupied mainly by shrubs, grass, Rose trees, and a few plants not much considered in the slimy one's menu. We are mostly affected with the large crested slug, and next in numbers is that small white horror that swarms over lawns at nightfall; we have little snails, too, which destroy the Violets. *Codonopsis ovata*, a great favourite of mine, is also a favourite slug salad; in one night the brutes, previously quiescent in that region, ate up a nice plant in full second blossom, and the next day's ring of lime was too late to do more than just avert complete destruction. Pyrethrums they will not leave alone, so long as they have the least chance of getting at them.

The Begonias here, like those of most people, from all reports I have received, have been extra good this year. I never put them in full sun, and some of the best are in the small road garden, where they never get more than an hour's sun per

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diem. They have a made bed, so the beautiful builders' rubbish soil, in which the grass surrounding the beds obstinately refuses to grow, does not trouble them, and they seem to enjoy the shade immensely, while the more it rains and blows the gayer they become.

I have come to the conclusion that bulbs are very generally neglected in small gardens, whereas one can get an amazing amount of pleasure and variety out of them for the small space they occupy, and their cheapness is a marvel. I am repeating the Tulip bed which was a success last year, and have bought fresh bulbs—200 singles in sixes of a sort—for it. The old bulbs were taken up in June and immediately replanted in groups in the borders, principally in the Rose bed. I suppose this was heretical practice, but in a small garden it seems such waste of ground to have nothing between the Roses, and as we have been very liberal in respect of making up good deep beds and in mulching, I hope the Roses will really not suffer. In arranging the Tulip bed no special care was taken as to assortment of colour, but the taller groups of six were put at the back and the dwarfs in front. The general effect was

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good, and not spotty as might have been imagined, for many of the variegated Tulips contained the same colours as the selfs in broken mixture, and so carried out, as it were, the colour scheme, yellows, like *Chrysolora* and *Canary Bird*, leading up to *Kaiser's Kroon*, and through whites to pink and whites, like *Cottage Maid*, on to *Couleur Ponceau* and the gayest of cherry colours. I am very fond of pink Tulips, and have provided some groups of this favourite colour for the new beds. *Rose Gris de Lin*, *Rosamund Huyckman*, *Proserpine*, with a further supply of the delicious *Apple blossom pink* and white *Cottage Maid* among singles, and such few as are obtainable among doubles. I am going to have a mixed bed of doubles, in fives also, and see how it works, but as the *Begonias* at present in occupation are in full beauty they must be left in possession a while longer.

My wee greenhouse is very gay with *Primula obconica grandiflora* and *Primula fimbriata*. What splendid amateurs' plants these are! They take so eagerly to their new pots—I give them two shifts from the seed pan—and make such jolly round plants, the essence of health and vigour,

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with perpetual bloom. I wanted *Primula o. rosea* very much, but foolishly believed in certain recommendations anent penny packets, though I ought to have known better as far as greenhouse plants are concerned. All the primula seeds, penny packets and shilling packets, were sown in the same large pan; the latter came up, the former did not. I have a fine batch of the fringed Lilac *fimbriata*, with its pretty gold and purple eye, and some strong plants of *grandiflora*, which is a vast improvement on the type in size and freedom of bloom, but not one *rosea*. This repotting gave me a mild eczematous rash on the fingers, it is true, but my own carelessness in handling the hairy stalks and underneath of the leaves without gloves was wholly to blame. They never do me the smallest injury when I pick the flowers or move the pots, but they do sting like nettles if repotted with the bare hand.

XIV

DECEMBER

"THE greatest of all blessings," said Haydon, the painter, "is to have one's own way." To which he might have added, "and to have it without paying for it." This exquisite concatenation of circumstance is of the rarest in our existence mundane, therefore it is worth placing on record that it has occurred in connection with the Oblong. For some time past, I have been wishing to raise the level of the side borders, but the idea of the cost and difficulty of getting loam up the side of our residential (mild) precipice deterred me. On going to see my little bit of hired reserve across the road, where my German Pansies are in a fresh and spring-like blow, exquisitely un-Novembrian, the other day, however, its owner offered it to me, not only in tenure but in entire possession, provided I would take it bodily away. It was first, and from time to time, a dumping ground for potting

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soil, leaf-mould, and burnt stuff, and between whiles a hen-run, wherefrom it may be deduced that in bulk it is worth having. The stalwart development of my Pansies speaks loudly in its favour, and I rejoice fervently to see it spread some inches thick over my wan and shrunken shady border where the box edging always seems to have a certain hungry effect upon the soil near it, sucking and consuming it until it sinks in. Whether it actually eats it or not I should not like to say, but I am persuaded in my own mind that there are plants which do this. They are those which hide hollows round their stems with big spreads of leafage.

There is a good deal of advice floating about which does not prove a very efficient guide when we come to practicalities. In some paper addressed to the unlearned I came across a strong recommendation of *Mysotis Rechsteineri* as a surface bedder for bulbs, and thought it was just the thing for the centre bed in my small front plot, which, by the way, I have lately had gravelled round and converted into a stiff little Dutch garden, for grass there seemed impossible; but on further investigation I found that most of my catalogues did not even mention the little Forget-me-not, and

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after much searching it was discovered in the Newry pamphlet at 9d. a root. For my little three-feet bed this works out at between 20s. and 30s., for which expenditure I could certainly find a more desirable return. It would buy two dozen Roses, to begin with. There are also a few persistent mistakes which one is always meeting, and which are very aggravating. One of these is the misnomer "*Gruss au Teplitz*," which people, who really ought to know better, allow to take the place of the Rose's properly-conjoined name in its native language. Certainly one needs to be something of a linguist to tackle Roses nowadays; but then Press readers are supposed to know everything. I have often been much moved mirthwards by the strenuous efforts of gardeners and nurserymen's assistants when such mouthfuls as Mme. Chédane Guinoisseau and Grossherzogin Victoria Melita rolled marvellously from their overpowered tongues. Good simple Bessie Brown, why have we not more like unto thee? Thou art a Rose as fair as any by a Teutonic title.

The rain has been raining every day, and, it would seem, for many weeks past. The gravel paths of the Oblong are all greened over, masses of soaked fallen

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leaves are everywhere, and sloppy disorder reigns supreme. It is impossible for anyone with the average human tendency towards cold-catching to work out of doors, so for want of other occupation I have pulled down the back staging in my little greenhouse and am putting in some climbing Roses against the wall in its place. The range of choice is so wide that decision becomes difficult. At last I cast the lot, and it fell on Pink Perle des Jardins, and Fortune's Yellow, and I am also planting a *Clianthus puniceus*, for love of its quaint lobster claws, and because no very close neighbour has it, so it has not become hackneyed. At present my seventeen nine-inch pots of *Chrysanthemums* are sweetly gay. They have been grown with complete disregard to and ignorance of the proprieties of bud securing and proper regulations, but have had plenty of attention as to staking, tying, and watering. Since the beginning of August they have had alternate waterings with a weak infusion of cow manure, and one of Clay's fertiliser; they stood along the side of one of the gravel paths in the Oblong in a sheltered position until the middle of October, and since then they have been really pretty in the greenhouse.

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They are well clothed with foliage quite down to the pots and have plenty of blossoms—not, I suppose, at all what they should be from a professional point of view, but yet of good size in most cases. I got the Japanese varieties quite at random, tempted by their descriptions, and this being the first year I have tried Chrysanthemums for myself (having previously bought a few each autumn) I had no knowledge of their little ways. But I am now convinced that they are good utter amateurs' flowers, and for amateur growing need not be surrounded with so many injunctions as are generally connected with them. Of the singles I tried, the pleasure has been a good deal spoilt by the discovery that their labels are hopelessly mixed; I think this must be due to the garden boy, as Adam strenuously denies having taken any interest in them. One is a splendid large flower of a glowing Indian red or rosy terra-cotta, with a broad and beaming yellow eye, about three feet high, with shorter shoots all bearing quantities of blooms; this is a real gem, and has been much admired; it is novel and striking and unique in colour. Then there is a very charming pinky white, whose petal rays are just faintly turned backwards at

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the tips ; it has big blooms, and flowers in solid clusters, also a good greeny white which I think can only be *Niphetos*. All the three yellows I had are poor little things as flowers go, and evidently unsuited to be naturally grown—even as little bush plants covered with bloom I do not think I should care for them ; their blooms recall *Anthemis tinctoria*. A pink is of the same character and quality. My nicest Japs are *Phœbus*, brilliant yellow ; *Ma Perfection*, *Niveus*, and *Emily Silsbury*, white ; and *G. C. Schwabe* and *Viviand Morel*, pink. In the little house there is a white *Plumbago* with which I have wrestled unceasingly, but which has beaten me all along the line so far. I “went by the book” and pruned it one year, as we are told to do ; another year I left it to itself ; result the same, a few blossoms in November. I thought this might be due to lack of sun, as it is not in the sunniest part of the house, and trained some of it along into the full glare ; *these* branches have not flowered at all, but some of those in the shadiest corner are doing so now. Of course the cold snubs it unmercifully every year while it still has a few buds unopened and green, but I should like to find out what want it has unsatisfied.

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I wish somebody would take *Cosmos bipinnatus* in hand and cause it to have the same pretty flowers it has now with about one-fourth of the present amount of stalk and leafage.¹ The flowers, when you get them, are really fascinating, and a bouquet of whites and the peculiarly pretty soft pink ones is charming, and lasts ever so much longer than one of the single Dahlias. A little of the green, all feathery and fresh, is also pretty, and the lateness of its flowering—mid-October and onwards—does not signify; is, indeed, a virtue in these western parts. But it is too greedy and rampageous of stalk to be a general favourite, though it has great possibilities.

How amiable are nurserymen as a race. I do not know any folk more obliging and less contemptuous of the "small way." I wished this year to try some of the *Narcissus* bulbs which, bought by the dozen, mount up in half-crowns and nice little steps of easy addition to a fair sum. Now experiments in Oblongs, as the proprietors of Oblongs probably all know very well, have not so much chance of success as those carried out in gardens of wider

¹ This has been done, and several firms now sell seed of a dwarf variety.

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claims ; I therefore intimated to the vendor that I should prefer, small as it made me feel, to buy in threes. Did he wither me with a glance, as I am sure the butcher would have done if I had asked for my mutton chops split in halves or one rib of beef at a time ? Or did he suggest, with a scornful intonation, that I had better be content with a few dozens of Von Sion, and so on ? No, he replied that he should be most happy, and took infinite pains to send a whole regiment of neat little paper bags containing humble triads of white Trumpets and Hoop Petticoats and other charmers of the elusive race. Association with flowers must certainly be stimulating to the better mental qualities just as living with the meat makes the butcher fat, apart from the eating of it.

At last the Oblong has arrived at that consummation which has been impending for some time past, but which is none the less something of a shock now that it is accomplished finally and definitely, to wit, repletion. All the extra beds that could be made have been made, and the disposal of a delightful batch of plants, the last of three autumnal consignments, has reduced the available space to that interesting dimension known, I believe, to people of

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education as the nth. It might be possible to insert a Crocus or two, or half-a-dozen Squills, between some of the perennials, but any larger operation would necessitate the removal of some already established occupants. I must own that all the laws of garden beauty as laid down for us by the highest authorities have been violated in respect of my later acquisitions, and that where I had no room for three plants I put in one, and thus committed the crime of "spot," but what is the owner of a 100 foot by 50 foot oblong to do when possessed of an amassing disposition, a big bump of acquisition, and the inelastic space mentioned? Perhaps it may be counted to me for an excuse that I have at least tried to keep families together.

I wanted a variety of Campanulas, both for comparison and because, being by compulsion a stay-at-home individual, I saw no other opportunity for becoming better acquainted with these really "fascinating flowers," and only one bed, a somewhat raised, new, crescent-shaped affair, under the partial shade of an Apple tree, was available, consequently the plants here are all singles; but, at any rate, they are all Campanulas. C. Van Houttei, planted about a month ago, is indulging in a

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crop of presumably third or fourth bloom already. I like its long, bright blue, downward-looking bells very much. It is more straight and mottled than *C. medium* (the Canterbury bell), about the same size, but narrower mouthed and more pointed of segment; bluer, too, than the blue form of the biennial. My Canterbury Bells are still blooming, by the way, and have been ever since late July. We resolutely refused to let them seed, and they have gone on unweariedly flowering in consequence. Also, I have Pansies every whit as big and fine as their first beginnings of the gorgeous Trimardean strain. They, too, have given me work all through the season at dispodding, but rewarded it richly. These are the compensations of the small way, wherein small operations like these are interesting and there is time for them.

To return to the *Campanula* bed, which in happier, *e.g.*, larger, circumstances would be the Bell-flower garden; it holds about twenty divers kinds. Of these *C. pulla* is the smallest, *C. macrantha* the largest, and *C. Burghalti* the most charming to my eye in colour, having more pink and less blue in its mauve or lilac than most; others in possession are *C. Hendersoni*,

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C. Hosti alba, *C. persicifolia* (blue and white), *C. turbinata*, *C. carpatica* (blue and white, with a reserve in pots in case of disaster), *C. nobilis alba*, *C. garganica*, *C. alliariaefolia*, *C. nobilis*, and *C. rhomboidea*. The confusion which at present surrounds the bellflower family nomenclature, however, is against them as a hobby, and I hope someone will take them in hand and do away with synonyms.

Already the first spikes of the Bride *Gladiolus* are rising; they must be mulched with cocoa fibre. Last year they had a straw blanket, and very untidy it looked; this year they are established and presumably hardier. I am so disgusted with the clumps of *Watsonias* and *Trigridias*, which were stout and sturdy of leaf but made no attempt to flower, that I shall let them also take their chance in the open air under a thick fibre *duvet*. The *Fuchsias* are standing in their pots, having been disinterred from the bed in which they were plunged to await the wholesome check of a few chill nights before going indoors to occupy a spare empty room. They are too large now for their old quarters under the stage in the small greenhouse. What roots they have made! We thought it would be less trouble to

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plunge their pots than to plant them out, but it came to the same thing in the end, for they had to be repotted and have the long tresses, too good to cut away, tucked in safely. I wish them to form specimens, as they are all good sorts, Phenomenals, etc., so they could not be drastically served.

The lawn, which suffered terribly in the summer from the ill-usage bestowed upon it by the dogs of the family—or, rather, the dogs who form the family, since they are by far its largest item—has been partly relaid, well rolled, dressed with basic slag, and generally comforted. Personally, I am of opinion that these little minnikin lawns give a great deal more trouble than they are worth—what with incessant weeding and the perpetual reconstruction which seems to be incumbent on their welfare—but Adam regards grass with a favourable eye, as costing little in proportion to the remainder of the garden, and accommodating the shady and delectable seat whereon he loves, all through the summer, to—meditate (let us have things put as nicely as possible; the soft word costeth nothing), and so the lawn, such as it is, has been wired off, and the merry sport of drawing imaginary badgers and digging

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out dream foxes from around the Apple trunks is at an end. All the dogs can jump the wire; even the terrible two months' puppy, destructive as a tornado, can climb it, but they, for some inscrutable reason, never attempt to do so unless they see us in the garden, when they at once join us as if in pity for our dogless estate. On these occasions, however, there is no digging, and the general aspect of the oblong is, needless to say, all the better for the want of the lordly excavations that it used to boast.

The Apples have long been picked, for they were tumbling and bruising themselves, and the lack of their midday smiles bedulls the trees and gives one a premonitory shiver of cheerless winter. Last February I persuaded a Mistletoe berry to begin growing on the trunk of the most worthless of the Apple trees. It went so far as to form a tiny loop of stiff stalk, fixed at both extremities, in the bark, but gets no further. The stalk alone is green and apparently alive, so that we can but hope that this is the ordinary method of Mistletoe inception, useful as an exercise of the grace of patience.

I think I have praised *Stokesia cyanea* before, but it deserves another word. It

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is still flowering away and looks as fresh as in June, while the fringed, filamentous, bright lilac-blue, Aster-shaped flower is a gay spot of colour. It is neat and low too, and spreads very slowly, a charming front-of-the-border plant, and no favourite with snails or slugs.

Little graveyard shrubs are beginning to be set up in their little smug ugliness in people's window-boxes and bulb-beds all about. I have a peculiar distaste for these dwarfish *Euonymuses*, *Thujas*, and so on, though I know they are general favourites. Their presence seems to me like putting mittens and a Shetland veil on the garden and making it play at enjoying itself out of doors while it only wants to be tucked up and go gracefully and in peace to sleep. A bare brown bed, to my taste, whets the appetite for spring beauties better than those simulacra of growth and greenness out of season.

XV

ABOUT BUYING PLANTS

How *not* to buy would perhaps be a subject upon which to dilate with greater profit to my fellow enthusiasts than can be conveyed to them by advice apt to urge them on a career of extravagance, for I am myself perpetually being accused by my nearest relatives—none of them garden lovers—of a tendency towards the vices of a spendthrift. But a garden is like a child—it must be fed, and the older it grows the more it wants. It must have all sorts of comparatively uninteresting supplies, the bread and cheese of its existence, loam and manure and flower-pots, cocoanut fibre refuse, gravel, turves, and rockery stones—the latter very dear to buy in these parts, but often to be obtained for the carting where an old garden is being demolished. It must have seeds, and it ought to have the best, because raising them gives you exactly the same amount of trouble whether the

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results are good or not, and the reward of raising good blooms is worth having in the end. It must have frames and trellis work, and if you keep dogs, fencing, and if you allow birds, netting. It must have new box edgings, new tiles, and general renovations, and last and largest of all, it is perpetually wanting to run up a bill for roses, bulbs and perennials. Yet it is worth while to consider how very much pleasure is to be had out of a little money when the garden is in question. There is a positively astonishing power in five pounds when it is spread out over half-a-dozen catalogues, and even ten shillings brings me a large box of plants, the unpacking and planting of which is as purely delightful as the hour spent in marking and choosing them from the catalogue. Some people lose an immensity of pleasure because they do not indulge in catalogues, and often they would like to enjoy them, and do not do so merely because they don't know how to get them. They have vague ideas that certain growers should be applied to for certain plants, but who these men are they know not, and therefore they stick to their own local nurseryman, who, being only mortal, cannot possibly be the best

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possible hand at every root and plant, vine and fig-tree ever invented! Nor can they find out who is who in the horticultural world by merely reading the garden papers, for every advertiser puffs himself, naturally enough, and all appear equal, from the vendor of marvellous novelties warranted to disappoint, like the big cow-parsnip and the *tropæolum speciosum* that "will grow anywhere," while all good gardeners know that it won't do anything of the sort, and is the most particular plant existing—almost—to the lifelong student and enthusiast who has made of his nursery-grounds a marvellous display, instructive even to the greatest authorities of the day. The advertisements of these latter—there are several of them—are modesty itself when we consider all they have done and are doing, but very much smaller people word their lucubrations just in the same way, and the poor *ignoramus* has no chance among them. It is invidious to make distinctions, but it can do no one any harm to hear where the Oblong derived its most precious possessions: and the dreadful rule of up-to-date pressdom which—I suppose necessarily—enacts that only advertisers can be mentioned, has no scope in a happy

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book like this! There are plenty of splendid nurseries, like that of Mr Backhouse, which I cannot speak about from personal knowledge because I never had the happiness of being near enough to them to see them: but when you meet with the names of owners of such places immortalised as in *Campanula Backhousei*, you may take it for granted your poor little efforts and halting steps will be helped along if you apply to men who are thus distinguished by their works. As an instance I may cite the trouble Mr Barr, whose nurseries are at Surbiton, and who is noted primarily for his daffodils and also as a hardy plant-grower, took in writing me a long letter in reply to some queries I sent with an insignificant order for a couple of water-lilies: the whole method of growing them in tubs was put before me very clearly, and the letter was most helpful. Mr Perry, too, of Winchmore Hill, has more than once taken a good deal of trouble to help the Oblong to its little wants, and like Barr's, Perry's plants are of first-class excellence, and well worth the small excess of their cost over the cheaper ones it is sometimes possible to obtain. I have often heard it said, "Oh, I could not think of giving 1s. and

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1s. 6d. each for plants; I can get them quite as good for 2d.!" but on examination, this lofty assertion never held water. Firstly, it would turn out that what had been procured was only of a common kind—everyday flowers, pretty enough, but neither new nor rare nor of the finest excellence; secondly, the plants were small; and thirdly, they were badly packed. Now a box from Barr's, or from any other nurseryman of equal standing, is a complete lesson in the art of packing, and is as carefully arranged and as neat as a compendium of games, while the acme of compactness really seems reached in those from that prince of packers, Mr T. Smith of Newry. And by the way, if a rare shrub or plant is in question, the neat little Newry catalogues, a bunch of little tract-like blue volumes, are a tolerably safe draw; I have never but once looked for a thing in them without finding it. For people whose purses trail lamentably behind their ambition, a very great deal of gratification can be found inside the red covers of the catalogue issued by the Horticultural Company, Levenshulme; this firm does not go in for out-of-the-way plants, but sells numbers of good perennials and roses at very moderate

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prices. Then there is the Hardy Plant Company, at Guildford, Mr Potts, of Rainsford, and for spring bulbs, Mr Clarke, of Pershore Street, Birmingham, must not be forgotten when I mention the Oblong's most useful acquaintances. For several years it has indulged in wonderfully cheap tulips from Theodore Turner, of Great Sutton, and finds economy pay here, for a fresh supply each year, with the best of the old ones saved and planted in odd corners, makes far the gayest show. What I would like to impress upon those who want to buy is the desirability of consulting specialists in these matters. Go to a big bulb man for bulbs; to a narcissus man for narcissi; to somebody like Messrs Cannell for zonals (geraniums); to a man knowledgeable in hardy plants for perennials, and to a lily man like Mr Wallace of Colchester for lilies, because, however small a garden is, it may as well have good things as poor ones, and the benefit of the best advice; also, it is everybody's duty to encourage men who set themselves to improvement, each in his own line. The pleasure of choice is immensely increased, and money goes farther when what it buys is of the very

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best. Exactly the same remarks apply to seeds; but here the big men are not so considerate for little gardens as they might be. I do not suggest penny packets, because it does not seem to me reasonable to expect the best results for such a sum; but if Messrs Sutton and Messrs Webb and Messrs Carter and the rest whom I worship afar off to the extent of 5s. or so a year each would only condescend to make quarter packets! The best way is for friends to club, but they must *be* friends, or there will be ructions over division, and subsequent rivalries.

What to buy is as difficult a question as from whom to buy. Here are some hardy things I advise everybody who has decent soil in an oblong to try; they may not all succeed, some of them will probably die, but all are worth having if there is a chance of health for them. There are plenty more, of course, but these are this oblong's special favourites and therefore personally recommended, though I will in no wise be answerable for their being even the best of their kind in all situations:—

Alyssum Saxatile, golden flowers in spring, neat tufts for front of border.

Anemone St Brigid, all sorts of gay colours,

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violet, red, etc., with black hearts, bright and most charming.

Anemone apennina, flowers in early spring, lovely pale blue on neat green tufts: leaves disappear in the course of the summer: plant in masses.

Anemone Japonica Lord Ardilaun, white, and *Rosea superba*.

Aubrietia.—*A. Leichtlini*, pink, *A. Souvenir de W. Ingram*, pink, and *A. Campbelli*, pay for growing from summer-sown seed, and make lovely clothing for stones.

Arabis alpina, both single and the new double, *flore-plena*, always neat and gay in spring, for edgings, etc.

Asters (Michaelmas daisies) in as many of the new sorts, such as *A. Esmé*, as the garden and the purse can possibly manage, not forgetting Mr Wolley Dods lovely new hybrids and the dwarfer and larger flowered section, including *A. amellus* *bessarabicus* *major*, *A. acris*, *A. turbinellus*, and the inimitable *A. Thomsoni*, a rare gem to which, if need be, I would sacrifice all the rest. The Alpine asters, *A. alpinus* *albus*, *A. A. roseus*, *A. A. superbus*, etc., are dear little plants for rockwork and neat in small gardens, but I find them rather pernicky.

Anthemis tinctoria is a tansy-like plant, useful to fill up, but not of the highest order of beauty, yet to be advised for cutting. *A. Kelwayi* is a good kind.

*Anthericum*s, the St Bernard and St Bruno lilies, the Oblong much covets, but they will not grow in it. Still, try them everywhere, all ye who read!

Aquilegias are too slow here in establishing themselves, but *A. Stuartii* is lovely.

Arenaria balearica, a sweet wee covering growth of freshest green, is a martyr to slugs, yet should be planted on every rockery, however small.

Asclepias tuberosa have; its yellow waxlike heads are charming in their unique tone of colour, but

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avoid the dull ugly purple *A. incarnata* which deludes by a pleasing title.

Auriculas are interesting to grow from seed sown in June or July in a shady frame. Sometimes they take months to begin coming up, and the last are the best. There is some lack of colour in the border strains, and the show kinds are useless for out of doors, but nevertheless every small garden should have some for their old-world charm and interest.

Boltonias are plants some folk despise, but one the Oblong has is much admired because of its very tall yet neat growth, making for variety in the border, and its late summer cloud of star-daisy blooms, very long enduring.

Campanulas should be grown by those who love them in all the middle-sized and smaller varieties. Only read the Newry list and there is occupation for a big bed and much time offered! Canterbury bells from summer sown seed, and the perennial forms also, if there is room to put them out when ready. Like Carnations, they do best if grown from seed on the spot.

Centaurea macrocephala is the only one of this rather weedy family welcomed in the Oblong. Its great yellow turk's-head-broom tops are handsome, but rather transient.

Cheiranthus alpinus, and *C. a. Marshalli*, yellow and orange, like little floribund wallflowers of spring, are gay on a rockery, but divide them year by year, or they may disappear.

Chelone barbata is grown with the Pentstemons, great favourites, which it resembles. Each autumn cuttings are set of these in pots in the cold frame, in case the old plants fail to outlast the winter. The range of colour in the new Pentstemons as raised by Mr House of Westbury on Trym and many others is marvellous, and the flowers are tropically big and glorious.

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Of *Chrysanthemums* (*indica*) the oblong has a bush or two permanently outside, yellow, white, and pink : but if the autumn is rainy only Ryecroft Glory is good to see : the others turn brown. Of the *Leucanthemum* kind it owns two, a tall and a dwarf, both carrying myriads of big white ox-eye daisy flowers, but these have no names : Mr Maurice Prichard of Christchurch supplied them, and they are superb each in its season, the dwarf first and the giant later. Of single *indica* *Chrysanthemums*, experiment out of doors should be made by everyone, choosing the larger flowered kinds. They are as gay as single *Pyrethrums*. These latter are good to grow from seed, but the Oblong is rather too dry in summer for them. Nevertheless, with plenty of watering, they do fairly well.

Cistus, and its little brother, *Helianthemum*, or the Rock and Sun Rose, is much beloved in the Oblong. The latter's yellow, pink and white flowers on neat little bushes only a few inches high adorn the rockeries ; and *Cistus florentinus*, a bush not over eighteen inches high, with big, white, golden-centred blooms is a special favourite. Sun and drought do the little *Helianthemums* no hurt, no matter how they are scorched. *H. Pink Beauty* is delightful over a big stone.

Clematis erecta and *C. davidiana* in the border, and as many of the *Jackmannii* sort as can be planted on the walls—the shady wall suits them best—flourish in the Oblong, but the latter sometimes die hurriedly after the manner of their kind. Certainly shading their lower parts helps them. *C. davidiana* is unique in colour, but not equally bright in its porcelain blue in all gardens.

Codonopsis ovata is a sweetly pretty little Bell-flower, fairy-like for a rockery, but slugs love it. It is also called *Glossocomia*.

Convolvulus seeds can be had in great variety from

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German seedsmen and many out-of-the-way kinds of *Ipomæas* are well worth growing over stumps, etc., for the summer. *C. mauritanicus*, blue, is pretty, and not very common. The Morning Glories deteriorate if left to seed themselves, and good seed is best bought in separate colours and sown yearly in pots to be afterwards turned out. Here the blooms stay open all day long in bright weather and endure well.

Crocuses.—Why buy only the Dutch spring ones? The Oblong has winter and very early sorts, and even if they need a bell glass, *C. Sieberi*, blue, *C. ancyrensis*, yellow, and *C. imperati*, striped, buff and violet outside and lilac inside, are gems for a sunny rockery.

Cyclamen.—The hardy Neapolitanum grows on one rockery, and is charming in a little pen of sandstone, for even if it does not flower its heart-shaped leaves give pleasure in their colour.

Dahlias.—It is too dry for these here, but John Bennett—red, and Mrs Gladstone—pink, are two double show beauties.

Double Daisies (*Bellis perennis*) are merry little things and grow from the best mixed seed, and though they suffer from drought, make neat and pretty edgings. My red ones all turned into speckled pink and white last year! They need dividing annually to flower well.

Delphiniums.—For a little garden I would buy these in named varieties. They are priceless, and the dwarf turquoise blue *Belladonna* one of the loveliest flowers of the garden. But it has a trick of disappearing in winter time, and must be watched as slugs love it. Annual larkspurs I grow from seed and use for filling up odd spaces, and they are very gay. *Delphinium Cardinale*, scarlet, should be planted as a contrast to the paler blues: it is lovely. So is *D. Barlowi* (blue).

Dianthus.—These are not very happy here. But

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D. Napoleon III., D. superbus, single, which has an exquisite scent, and D. Caesius, the Cheddar pink, should be tried on all crumbly walls or bits of sunny rockery. Dianthus Heddergii and the other Indian pinks—annuals—are slug-loved, but very smart and gay. Carnation Marguerite also.

Dictamnus fraxinella alba is a lovely thing I would not leave out on any account. Its quaint sticky seed pods smell like lemon verbena, and it is very neat and compact. The pink one is poor in colour.

Dracopcephalum grandiflorum is worth having. So too is *Echinacea purpurea*, and *Echinops ruthenicus*, one of the lovely silvery blue thistles, which makes an exquisite group with pale blue delphiniums.

All the *Erigerons* are good small garden plants; from *Erigeron mucronatus*, the little creeping pink daisy, to the glorious *E. speciosus superbus*, of which the big hardy plant men have a specially good form, this with *E. glabellus*, mauve, *E. macranthus*, deep lilac, *E. aurantiacus*, yellow, and *E. philadelphicus*, pink, are worth growing from seed. *E. salsugmosus* (grey) is also good, and *E. Coulteri*.

Fuchsias.—The hardy fuchsias are pretty, but too brittle of stem to use where cats or dogs are much about.

Funkias are snail and slug harbours, but *F. Sieboldi* should be tried for its cool big leaves and lilac bells.

Gaillardias.—These are marvels of floriferousness, and bloom all the summer through unweariedly. Named varieties are in many cases so much alike that to buy *G. hybrida splendida* or mixed seedlings will do. Like delphiniums they improve up to the third year, when they should be divided.

Galega.—The old white *G. officinalis alba* is so useful for cutting and so gay it has a prominent place. It is hardiest of the hardy here.

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Gentians.—Of this "difficile" family I have only *G. acaulis*, but *G. verna* and *G. septemfida* should be tried. *G. acaulis* does well as far as growth goes, but flowers reluctantly in this garden. Plant it close to a stone, and tread the ground hard all round it.

Geraniums.—The hardy *G. Endressi*, pink, *G. pratense flore-pleno*, blue, and *G. sanguineum*, are charming and very easy to grow. Their season of bloom in summer is not very long, but they have handsome leaves. *G. sanguineum album*, given to me by Mr Perry, is a real gem, a dwarf, white, and a free and long flowerer.

Gladioli do badly here, except the early kinds. The Bride, white, and some named pinks, and variegated beauties of the same habit, and *G. Brenchleyensis*, which, like the spring ones, I have in the ground all the year, protecting from frosts with cocoa fibre. The hybrid *Gladioli*, *Gandavenis*, *Lemoinei*, etc., are too impatient of drought for this soil.

Helenium and *Helianthus* (Sunflowers) :—

Helenium grandicephalum striatum.

Helenium Hoopesii, *H. autumnale grandifl.*

Helenium pumilum (Mr Perry's form).

Helenium pumilum magnificum.

Helianthus doronicoides (as shown by Mr M. Prichard).

Helianthus giganteus. *Helianthus plenus*.

These are the autumn glory of this garden, and each beautiful in its way. *Helianthus* Miss Mellish should be added. They need room and frequent dividing, but are everybody's plants.

Heliopsis.—Little known as these are, they are most valuable. *H. lævis* and *H. l.* Ernest Ladhams are neat rather dwarf bushes, with flowers between a sunflower and daisy, of the deepest and richest orange, deeper than any sunflower. Their season of bloom is very long, and they are grand for cutting.

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Hellebores.—Every little garden should have one Christmas rose and one Lenten rose. They like shade and moisture, but must have rich soil.

Try *H. niger maximus* for the first, and *H. guttatus* for the second, and give each a handlight to keep the blooms clean. In summer mulch with decayed manure to help the fleshy stalks and leaves. They do well in most places, but are very much averse to removal.

Hemerocallis.—Day-lilies are most accommodating things and come up year after year with improvement. I have *H. aurantiaca major*, new and grand, *H. disticha flore-pleno*, double big tawny and orange blooms, one at a time and each for a day, but many in succession, and the graceful rush-leaved *H. flava*, which smells very sweetly.

Heuchera.—*H. sanguinea* is an old plant, with pretty little coral crimson flowers high over a tuft of leaves. For the front it is showy, but I do not care for the white variety much. The new pink hybrids are prettyish. It won't grow everywhere but often dies in winter.

Iberis.—Candytuft—is nice for rockery frontage. Grown from seed sown in summer, it is very easily managed and useful. Synonym—*Aethionema*. *Ae. grandiflorum* is very good.

Inula.—This garden has but one, the best, I think, of all—*I. glandulosa*. It is slug-ridden, and does not do in poor soil. The flowers are bright orange yellow, with a full mass of thread-like petals round a daisy centre, the whole as big as a wild rose. It must be divided now and again like all the daisy and sunflower race.

Iris.—Like all well-beloved gardens this one has an Iris bed full of *I. germanica*. Mr J. Langford, Withington, Lancs., sells a delightful dozen for about 3s. 6d., all colours. But they can be had anywhere,

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and are always lovely, named or in mixture. They go on for years undisturbed if top-dressed with good loam and manure every spring. Iris sub-divisions are bewilderingly numerous, and some of the tiny bulbous irises are lovely under bell-glass culture on rockeries. Here only *I. cristata* of these does any good. *Iris stylosa*, the Algerian Iris, which blooms in winter, from January onwards, does well in a warm corner, and its white form may be added. *Iris Kämpferi* is good for tubs in little gardens: it is the Japanese form of the flower and glorious exceedingly. *I. reticulata*, the netted, sweet-scented purple Iris, should be tried in every garden. Kelway, of Langport, has a good form of it, for it varies, and has minor and major to its name. All the Irises want patient growers, and hate being worried and moved.

Kniphofia (*Tritoma*).—The red-hot poker is often ill-used. They are sent over from Holland in autumn like chopped bits of carrot, and expected to grow. Buy them at home and with the leaves on, and plant them deeply in rich leafy soil. Then have patience. *K. Macowani* (dwarf) is the best for small gardens, but I also have the glorious *K. nobilis*, six feet high. They hate drought and need a little cossetting in winter lest frost and snow rot them at the marrow.

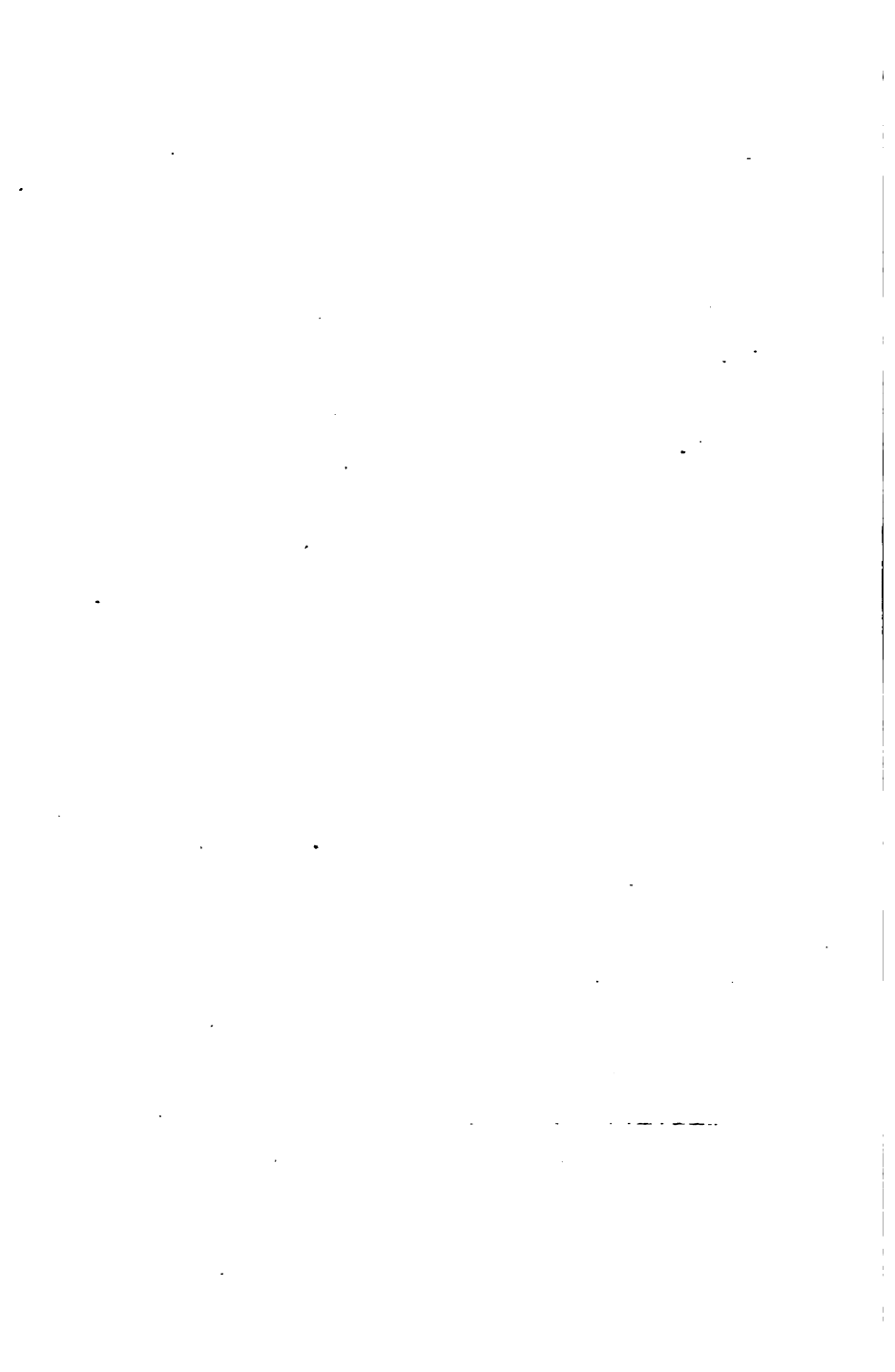
Lathyrus—the everlasting pea—is very hard to establish where summers are dry. Once it takes hold it is lovely. I have the pure white and the pink (*latifolius*) but I believe *L. rotundifolius* is about the best, on the whole.

Leontopodium (*Edelweiss*).—This funny little woolly affair, like a bunch of fairy night socks, grows quite contentedly on a sunny rockery here. It is more quaint than pretty.

Lily-of-the-Valley.—Grow Fortin's Giant: it is worth all the common sorts in the world and takes



KNIPHOFIAS IN THE BROOME GARDEN



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no more space or trouble. The *pink* lily-of-the-valley is *not* pretty though I have seen it praised. Summer mulches do wonders for these lovely flowers.

Linaria.—*L. macedonica*, a glorified yellow and orange toadflax with an insatiable appetite for flowering, and nice glaucous grey leaves and stems, and *L. repens alba*, a feathery foliaged little plant something after the manner (though unlike it really) of *Gypsophila paniculata*, with flowers like tiny lily-of-the-valley bells, are both good: the latter being useful for mixing with cut flowers. They like sun and don't mind drought. *L. macedonica* seeds freely.

Linum.—The blue flaxes, *L. narbonense* and *L. perenne*, are charming in colour and in every way, and very easy to grow. They bloom for a long time too and give a note of much appreciated colour.

Lithospermum.—*L. prostratum*, a little creeping dark green plant, is a most persistent bloomer, and the small tubular flowers are intensely blue. It is lovely on rockeries, to clothe the fronts of stones, etc.

Lupinus.—The yellow tree lupin is pretty for the centre of a bed or against a warm wall, and is attractive all the year round, but is not a long-lived plant and must be replaced every third year or so. I grow it and the charming *Lupinus polyphyllus*, blue, which is really gorgeous when in bloom, and quite inoffensive at other times.

Lychnis viscaria splendens plena is the only member of this family in the Oblong. It is pretty and gay, a front-of-the-border plant.

Malva moschata alba is the pretty satiny-flowered white mallow, which I like better than the pink one. One is enough, however, to my mind.

Mertensia virginica and *M. siberica* are exquisite in spring, especially the former. After flowering they disappear, so they should be put where there will be no disturbance. They are small plants, and

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the blue of *M. virginica* is indescribably enchanting in its tone.

Michauxia Campanuloides everybody should try, because those who can flower it gain kudos, besides the reward of its loveliness. I have not succeeded so far, but I am going to try seed this year.

Oenothera.—No garden can do without the evening primrose, but the neater and dwarfer kinds are preferable to the untidy form one most commonly sees—I think *O. Lamarckiana*. I have *Oenothera Youngii*, a little thing with red flower-stems and yellow blooms; *O. taraxacifolia*, white; *O. macrocarpa*, yellow; and the lovely *O. rosea*, well worth raising from seed.

Omphalodes verna I have, but think it an over-rated plant. It runs (and doesn't it run!) to leaf with me, but the flowers, like forget-me-nots, are a pretty bright blue. It is dwarf and creeping, and always being praised, so I mention it.

Oxalis corniculata rubra spreads like a weed, but is a sweet, little, dark brown-leaved wood-sorrel with gay yellow flowers, good for dry sunny spots. I have it under a sweet briar, where it is charming. *O. rosea* is delightful on a rockery, and Mr T. Smith has a lovely white *Oxalis* which keeps it company rarely. They flower most profusely all the summer long.

Origanum dictamnus is a pretty balm, low-growing and sweet, with inconspicuous pink flowers borne like bunches of wee hops, of a wholesome herb-like scent.

Pæonies.—These find my garden dry for their liking. I have one Moutan pæony, which grows slowly but surely and blooms with great pink roses as big as a soup-plate; several of the Chinese doubles, in rose-colour, yellow and white, which demand perpetual mulching and feeding to keep them lusty; and two old European pæonies, a

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deep red and a blush pink changing to white as it ages. They are all greedy, and the latter two do their diet most justice, for they flower profusely.

Papaver.—I do not love the big oriental poppies, because once they have bloomed they get so shabby and untidy. The Oblong can only boast Iceland poppies in orange, yellow, and white, the apricot-coloured *Papaver rupifragum*, which is as perpetual, flowering as *P. nudicaule* (the Iclander) and *P. glaucium Fischerii*, a gem.

Phlox decussata.—There are such numbers of named herbaceous phloxes that one's brain reels before a list. All I have are beauties, but they are not many, because these plants require such good soil to "do" them well, and make labour, also requiring space and the pick of situations, sunny yet not dry. *Phlox Iris*, *P. Panthéon*, *P. Eugène Danzanvilliers*, *P. Avalanche*, and the magnificent orange-scarlet *P. Coquelicot* are my choice, and show a fair range of colour, with great size and beauty of blossom. Of the dwarf alpine phloxes, so charming and desirable for draping stones and rockeries, I have *P. lilacina*, soft mauve; *P. G. F. Wilson*, an improved mauve; *P. Vivid*, a bright rose; and *P. Nelsoni*, white.

Of *Platycodons* or Chinese bell-flowers, which are really campanulas of open form, I have only *P. Mariesii*, a beautiful blue flower, very showy.

Plumbago Larpenæ nobody would imagine to be any relation to the greenhouse plumbago. It has bright blue flowers of the same tint as *Lithospermum prostratum*, borne on prettily coloured red and green shoots about eight inches high, and likes a warm place in front of the border.

Polemonium in its blue form—Jacob's Ladder,—always dies in the winter here, as it dislikes winter wetness. I plant it again now and then, as its pale

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blue flowers are very pretty, but it is an annoying plant, in that it presumes to be so much more particular than others quite as beautiful.

Polyanthus.—Grow these from seed if you want many, but *buy* the old China-blue form and Prince of Orange, which are to be had at Newry, for both are charming. Miss Jekyll's yellows and whites, grown at Munstead Wood, are unapproachable.

Polygonum baldshuanicum.—This is not a cheap plant yet, but it is worth all that was ever paid for it. It climbs and twists up a tall triangle of bean-sticks, and from thence along a wire at the top of the wall, and is charming all through the summer with its evenly twined brown stems and neat heart-shaped leaves, while later on it is foamed over with pinky-white sprays of most enduring bloom. It seems perfectly easy to grow, too.

Potentilla.—*P. Hopwoodiana*, primrose with crimson, and *P. formosa*, strawberry pink, are my favourites and grow well here. Some of the family are weedy, but these two are compact and neat in growth for the border-front.

Primroses.—I sow blues, and blues, and get dark blues and violets, but never a porcelain blue so exquisite as one I bought as a plant. Buy a *pale* blue "Wilson" primrose, or a dozen, if you can. The deep amethysts and purples and reds from first-rate seed are very fine, however.

Primula.—*P. rosea* and *P. japonica*, both lovers of a damp place, do well and are gay on my "tub" rockery. But of all this family I prefer *P. viscosa* major, a merry little dumpy bright pink primula, that loves a sunny nook between stones.

Saxifrages of the Mossy sort are very interesting when grown from seed. Bought, they seem expensive, but spread so fast they are not really so. *S. Wallacei*, *S. hypnoides* and *S. Rhei* are invaluable for planting

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(wee bits put in in early autumn spread and mass together very soon into a fair green cushion) over patches of half tender bulbs like *Ixias*, *Watsonias* and *Zephyranthes*, and such things as *Trilliums* that like to be shaded in summer. The *Megaseas*, or big *Saxifrages* are such snail traps I do not admit them, but they are handsome.

Schizostylis coccinea suffers from its dreadful name : it is invaluable, for it is merry with its scarlet *Ixia*-like spikes of bloom in very late autumn when colour is so much needed ; give it a front place in the rockery, and divide it every other year.

Shortia galacifolia I grow in a stone-walled nook at the front of a bed, where it will never be dried up. It is a spreading tuft of brilliantly-coloured heart-shaped leaves, much veined, all winter, and in the spring is a mass of pretty fragile sorrel-like blooms, pale pinkish and of good size. It is a gem, and deserves care and good peaty soil. It is hardy, but I put a handlight over it in time of frost.

Silene acaulis grow from seed to cover low edging stones, etc., with sheets of pink in summer time. The foliage is like that of a miniature and prostrate *Antirrhinum*. (By the way, *Antirrhinum Glutinosus*, prostrate and with primrose-coloured flowers, large for the size of the plant, is rare and very charming in the rockery.)

Statice latifolia should be grown with *Gypsophila paniculata*. Its filmy blue heads of individually small flowers are lovely in colour and useful for cutting.

Stokesia Cyanea I have spoken of elsewhere, and it is worthy of the highest praise.

Tiarella cordifolia is also well worth having in front of the border, and should be planted in a mass.

Tradescantia virginica is the prettiest of the Spiderworts ; it hates being dried up, but short of

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this, is tolerant. Its colour, deep to pale blue, is lovely, and it blooms most persistently. It is one of the best-admired flowers in the garden, for although not at all rare, nobody ever seems to recognise it. The white form is charming.

Trillium grandiflorum is pretty in a peat bed, surfaced with mossy Saxifrage.

Verbena Venosa is a good companion plant to *Plumbago Larpentæ*, liking the same treatment, and like it in habit. It has bright violet heads of bloom, and blossoms all the summer.

Veronica Traversi is a pretty neat bush and blooms profusely here; *V. repens* is an exquisite creeping plant for a rockery, and its sheets of bright light blue are most attractive. All the hardy Veronicas are most valuable in being ever green and ever fresh.

Vinca.—The periwinkles are great stand-byes for places where nothing else will grow, but they spread fearfully. The gay-leaved *V. major* elegantissima is far the handsomest of the family.

Violets.—Of the lovely large singles I find California the most satisfactory. Princess of Wales is finer, but blooms very shyly here, as in some other places. The single Neapolitan is free and very pretty, and the Czar always reliable. Violets about here generally seem to do best when their beds (in the open) are made up six or eight inches above the level of the surrounding soil, and of good rich stuff containing a good deal of old leaf-mould, but they must never suffer from drought in summer. I remake my violet bed every second year.

Zauschneria californica is a pretty thing for a warm rockery in full sun, where it likes its roots covered with a stone. It has bright scarlet tubular flowers, very gay.

XVI

ON LILIES

"Take a lily in thy hand
Gates of brass cannot withstand
The touch of that magic wand."

EMBLEM of all ages for purity, the lily is yet quite devoid of that insipidity sometimes associated with too much goodness. While the old white Mary lily, the Madonna-flower which lately has taken to socialism, in that it will often do better in cottage gardens than in our borders, where the fatal lily disease often attacks it, either spontaneously or by infection from newly introduced roots, is the type of innocence and virginity, some of the family are certainly types of gorgeous majesty in their glory of colour and overpowering richness of scent. One of the most magnificent of lilies and withal one of the very easiest to manage is *Lilium Auratum platyphyllum*, sometimes sold as *L. macranthum*, with its huge wide-open trumpets, larger than *L. auratum*, all

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spotted and flared with gold, crimson, and red-brown. *Auratum* itself is accommodating enough for its first season, and generally blooms well either in pots or the border, but after that it too often disappears. Like all lilies sent over from Japan it suffers from the ill-treatment and often entire removal of its basal roots. Home-grown roots are dear in comparison, but far better worth having. The *Speciosum* family, if good roots, plump, of fair size, and without decayed or dropping scales, can be had, is, I think, the section amateurs should first try. These are the lilies with reflexed petals of Turk's-cap shape, but much larger than the actual Turk's-caps, which we see bunched by the hundred in florists' windows, and they are delightfully easy of culture. I do not want to treat the Lilies from a technical point of view, because there are a good many which, while they are very lovely, are so "chancy" that it is best for anyone not owning Fortunatus' purse to buy them one at a time, and see how they behave. The *Speciosum* family, which, for purposes of buying, is identical with the *Lancifoliums*, will grow in any garden border of fairly good soil, provided it is not exposed to bitter winds or scorching

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drought. *Speciosum album*, white, and *S. Kraetzeri*, which only differs very slightly from it, are not spotted with colour: the spots on the petals are there merely as raised rounds. *Speciosum roseum* is spotted with dark rose, and *speciosum rubrum*, besides being spotted, is suffused with rose-red. Another deeply coloured form is *Melpomene*. These five are all good doers, and the former four are extremely cheap. Planted in clumps of six or twelve between Michaelmas daisies or peat shrubs, such as azaleas, they are lovely, and they also do very well when grown in nine-inch pots, four, five, or six bulbs to a pot, according to their size, with which their price varies. The "very fine" lily roots which cost most are not always better in bloom than the smaller ones, but it is very important that those which have been lying by and become flabby, with detached scales, should not be chosen. *Auratum*s and *speciosum*s, with one or two others I will mention, can be bought and planted up to the middle of March, but it is really best in all cases to plant lilies in the autumn, and it is necessary to do so with the smaller Turk's-cap lilies like *Pomponium verum*, the lovely little scarlet turban-lily, the

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attractive but not sweet-smelling *L. Pyrenaicum aureum* and *rubrum*, the martagon lilies, which personally I do not care about, the delightfully-coloured pink bell-lily, *L. rubellum*, which I think is the prettiest of all, a dwarf beauty liking rather dry sandy leaf-mould soil, the Thunbergianums—erect flowered dwarfs in shades of yellow, orange and red, often black-spotted, and the tiger-lilies, *L. tigrinum Fortunei*, and *L. tigrinum splendens*, which are the best of their kind. All these need the winter season to make root growth, and suffer greatly if they are kept out of the ground, for which reason it is much better to buy them from an English grower who will take them up out of the ground for you. *Lilium Browni*, a huge white trumpet, stained with umber, which in this garden is a special favourite, and which I have never heard anyone speak against as a grower, is also best planted in autumn, but will do if put in in spring. Like the *speciosums* and *auratums*, it will do well for pot work, and it is not a bad plan to grow your lilies in pots for one season, and turn them out into the garden afterwards. Pot lilies, of all the kinds which throw out a ring of roots from the stem as *auratums* do, must be planted very low

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in the pot to leave room for a liberal top-dressing to be applied over these surface roots when they appear. These are the annual roots, serving for the support of the coming flower; the roots from the base are more or less perpetual, and if the lily bulb is not disturbed will keep moving all the year round and nourish it. People whose little gardens are bound to be planned on the dot system ought to love lilies, for even when the whole of the beds and borders seem full, there will always be room for lilies here and there, between or close to other plants! In this garden I find *L. croceum*, the big orange lily of habit similar to the Madonna-flower, increase and bloom splendidly: it is, perhaps, better grown in Ireland than anywhere else, though it does well everywhere, and I got a particularly fine form from thence. The Tiger lilies, single and double, also do well, and both these and *L. croceum* seem to revel in fresh turfy loam. The Easter, or Bermuda lilies—*L. longiflorum*, of which there are several varieties, all with long, white, trumpet-blooms, like those of *L. Browni*, but smaller and pure white, are immense favourites with trade-growers, but for some inexplicable reason amateurs rather neglect them.

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Yet they are very easy to grow, and of course do not in the least need the forcing in hot-houses nurserymen give them in order that they may flower early. I grow them in and out of pots, and they never disappoint me. I do not suppose they would be quite so amiable in a colder place out of doors, but if potted in late autumn, as soon as they come over, and put in a cold frame, they will bloom in due course. Their scent is exceedingly delicious and not nearly so heavy as that of *L. auratum*. *L. rubellum*, by the way, little pink-trumpeted pet as it is, has a sweet little scent of its very own, and quite distinct from other lilies. I have, of course, tried *L. testaceum*, the apricot-coloured lily, which is like a *speciosum* in habit; but although nearly everybody praises it, it is not pleased to continue here, but after budding half-heartedly one season, refused to develop its blooms, and by the next season had departed altogether. Truth compels me to add that all these aristocratic lilies treat their admirers with very unflattering insouciance; and when you say adieu to one of them, after it has flowered, do so with the mental reservation that you are probably making it a last farewell. *L. pardalinum* and other bog lilies I have

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done my very utmost to please, digging out and making special beds for them with peat, etc., but so far with poor success ; so long as they appear at all, even sans blooms, however, there is always hope for their future.

XVII

ON THE DIFFICULTIES OF A TOWN GARDENER

ALTHOUGH the Oblong is not in a town, or, rather, is so far removed from the town, upon the healthy hill for which I feel daily gratitude, that no vile town odours oppress it, and we can look down from it upon the fogs and cold mists of winter, seething round and round in the hollow like true witches' broth in its cauldron, yet, by reason of its neither being exactly in the open country, is it exposed to a good many of the difficulties which attend town gardening. Out below it stretch the fields of a farm which goes right away to the ridge of the down, and looking this way you may imagine you are a primitive person sitting unclothed in a hillside cave, for all the glimpses you are likely to get of the public; but on either hand are other houses and other gardens—one, I am glad to say, empty, treeful, and a refuge for all the birds of the neighbourhood—and on

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the other side a road. There are no houses immediately opposite, but a heterogeneous sort of kitchen garden belonging to a house a little higher up, and below that a large piece of "gardening ground" rented by a jobbing gardener who occupies one of a row of cottages built upon it. This gentleman is my very convenient friend, and disposes of one of my difficulties, while he also causes one in the very act. I must, in order to describe this trouble, refer to a substance which all gardeners need and frequently talk about ; but the too-fully-dwelt upon mention of which in that delightful first book of Dean Hole's has often been remarked upon to me in tones of scandalised propriety by maiden and matron ladies who considered it, "so very vulgar, my dear." The stable produce, then, to veil its identity somewhat, is much wanted in the garden, but not in a crude condition, and we have nowhere to store it in bulk while it undergoes the necessary maturation. For love, and the use of it, my gardener permits our boy to convey it on his land, and we thus get rid of it, and are left without it. There is a small space discreetly veiled by a large syringa bush, part of an apple tree similar to that sug-

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gested as suitable for the suspension of a certain Irish patriot, and the end of the side wall, and here a small quantity of refuse matter can be accommodated: here also I find room for a small cartload of well-rotted cow-manure, which can at times be had from the farm before mentioned. This substance is stronger, more compact, less evil-smelling, and more economical in use than stable-manure, if it happen to suit the soil, as in my case it does. But in most towns it would be quite unattainable, unless by favour of some nurseryman, who would probably in any case be the best person to apply to in the difficulty of providing what every garden must have, wherever it is situated. No chemical substances or artificial manures can really take the place of good honest farmyard stuff, though in some cases, notably those where the soil has become quite black and is more or less sour, as in many town plots, a good load of fresh turfy loam may be even more urgently called for and do greater service. Besides the storage of manure, a certain quantity of which is always needed at hand for mulches and potting purposes, a supply of various ingredients such as turfy and fibrous loam, peat, sharp sand and leaf mould, is neces-

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sary. In a mixed collection of plants, such as I have in the Oblong, it would be simply courting failure to put all alike, as they come, into the garden soil, and a great part of the pleasure of gardening in a small way lies in the providing of a special little store of what it likes best for each plant, and so giving it as good a start as possible. It would be extremely convenient to have what in my case is impossible without the sacrifice of some precious space now sacred to flowers, to wit, a little building of some kind—one of the cheap one-windowed wooden erections which are sold at such small prices by “ready-made house” vendors, in which to store soils, keep pots and bast, and all the gardeners’ hundred and one etceteras, not to speak of tools, which here have to beg grudging accommodation in the little coach-house where the pony-carriage lives, and to everybody who has space for it, and does not already own a tool-house, I would strenuously recommend such a purchase. In default of any such special shrine I have annexed a rather damp cellar-region, a distant appurtenance of the kitchen premises which, after the manner of all the older houses on this hill, are built slightly below the ground-

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level, although by no means after area wise. Here I have an array of margarine buckets neatly painted dark green, in which I keep bushels and half-bushels of all the substances adverted to, while a large barrel holds loam. Peat of good quality is very difficult to get, and much of what the shops sell is really worthless, while there is no natural peat formation anywhere about. For this reason I do not attempt any American shrubs in the Oblong, but I can manage a happy surrounding for a few small things that like it, such as certain lilies, hardy orchids, trilliums, etc. I also keep a bucket of lime handy, this precaution dating from a certain occasion when, late on the evening before some one of the prolonged public holidays which are nowadays such a trial to everyone except the shop employés and,—presumably—their patron Saint Lubbock, I received a parcel of *Anemone pulsatilla*, a plant after which I had long nursed a strong hankering. As everybody knows, *A. pulsatilla* exacts a chalky or limestone soil, and in the Oblong there is not one single grain of either. In despair—the roots were in leaf, and needed immediate planting—I exhausted every possible source of supply: nobody could even

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offer precipitated chalk tooth-powder! All I could do was to wait: but *Anemone pulsatilla* has never done anything. It comes up each year with two or three curled and apparently healthy shoots, and generally these are a little further apart and there may be one extra, but they shortly afterwards disappear, and I can make nothing of it.

Another difficulty which is only felt in a modified form in the Oblong, but in speaking of which I know I am voicing the griefs and bitterness of hundreds of town gardeners, is the stupendous one of—cats! These horrible vermin—indoors I like a cat well enough, and I have no special objection to them in large country gardens, but in a town garden no language is strong enough to express the rightfully-earned reputation their acts gain for them—with the same inclination towards destruction as the accursed slug, and a hundredfold the power, are surely the garden lover's very sorest trial. Nothing, short of a strip of wire-netting placed at an angle of 45° on iron stays along the top of a garden wall, will keep them out, and it is not all gardens that have an effectual wall all round. The Oblong has only walls on either side, and these cats

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sometimes use as their highway when they are on the prowl up and down the hill. One black brute used to come daily and dig in my borders, but a most fortunately directed stone, thrown by an unusually alert stable-boy we had, happened to hit it — this is a chance which nobody else need hope to experience—and no cat will ever return to a place where it has once suffered any personal inconvenience, unless in pursuit of greater attractions than a mere garden offers. Another wretch made a thoroughfare over a border, a large bush of fuchsia, and one of the buttresses of the wall, which in a few weeks became heavily scored with the marks of its claws, deep scratches six to ten inches long, while the pretty crimson and blue tasselled branches of the fuchsia were nightly damaged, and the earth of the bed presented a beaten brick track. After long inward communing I sent the boy for bird lime, which boys have ways and means of procuring, and heavily applied it to the scratched buttress. The result was highly encouraging: the very next day the enemy gave up, and has not used his short cut since. I do not commend this method to anyone else for imitation, for under certain circumstances I suppose it

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might annoy the dear birds, whom I would not hurt for the world—not even the tiresome old hen blackbird who turns over all the mulching in the Oblong and with vigorous digs of her beak sends it flying over the paths—while it is the most terrible stuff to deal with in the matter of tenacity: but I do not think that any cat would visit a garden where it knew it might get birdlime on its feet or fur.

A very real difficulty which besets those who, with towering ambitions, have no heated greenhouse, is that of raising seedlings. The most delightful of all seed-sowing is, I think, that whereby we raise biennials and perennials, when the May, June, or July sown seed can be at once put in a frame, and no startling vagaries of climate vex the cultivator. But in the early spring everyone who has any gardening fervour at all is certain to feel a stirring of unrest which portends seed-fever, and the pressing symptoms of which are deep interest in catalogues, a too-hopeful acceptance of the glowing descriptions therein, and a vaulting ambition which if it does not o'er leap itself often leaps too high for success. Most amateurs sow their seeds too early: if

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they use a propagator the little plantlets come out of it and have to brave long chilly nights, which soon damp them off, in a greenhouse or frame not nearly warm enough for their requirements. On the other hand if some seeds are not sown early they have not time to get their full flowering period into the summer. In all previous springs I have found my asters, stocks, lobelia, etc., do very well if sown in a (home-made) propagator, or as the stable-boy had it, profligator, rigged up over the radiating Rippingille I used for heating the greenhouse, and afterwards grown on upon a shelf close to the glass in the same house and under the continued genial influence of the said Rippingille; but now that the greenhouse is no longer heated, I use a small hotbed, made up on the manure-heap and covered with a 3×4 frame. The home-made propagator was a startlingly simple affair, and as its results were always satisfactory may be considered worthy of imitation. It merely consisted of a wooden box, three feet long, ten inches deep, and twelve inches wide, half-filled with cocoa-fibre, which was kept moist, and covered by some panes of glass. The Rippingille radiating stoves, which are made in two sizes, both of which

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answer, while perhaps the lesser is the preferable for this particular purpose, have parallel rods fixed so as to support a tray or box just at the right height—a few inches—above the top horizontal pipe, and on this the box rested. To do things properly, one should buy the nice neat zinc trays and propagating glasses sold with the stoves, but I could never spare their cost from seed and plant bills! The glass over the box must be removed and wiped daily, and the seeds must be darkened for the first few days by a piece of matting or paper laid over them, but once they are up, the glass should be first tilted and then removed altogether, and great care must be exercised in avoiding any chance of their getting drawn or weak. I have never tried pernickety seeds such as begonias or cyclamen by this process, but for asters, stocks, phlox drummondi, zinnias et hoc genus omne, I can certify it entirely successful—with care. The great thing about lamps of all kinds is to do them oneself. The job is not attractive, and is apt to be attended to a little later day by day, until at last the shades of night fall on the terrible oily rag, duster, oil-can, with its long thin spout, brush for wicks, and but too necessary gloves, all

A Garden in the Suburbs

undisturbed : but procrastination beyond a certain point is fatal, and once a lamp has smoked it is never quite the same again. No servant, however good, will ever keep a greenhouse lamp really well ; the invariable impulse of the domestic is towards cutting the wicks, a fatal error, and letting oil slop over the screw-hole in the lamp, a carelessness productive of dreadful smells and most lasting in its effects. The wicks should always be pinched along between (gloved) thumb and finger to remove the charred top, and then brushed, and every particle of char must be brushed out of the netting concavity which surrounds them. As a rule one filling in twenty-four hours is quite enough, and I used to burn about $1\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of oil a week in my small stove, and 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in the larger one. In my little house there is a good deal of moisture, not to say damp, as there is earth beneath the stages, and it is bounded at one end by a rather moist wall, thus the radiating stoves did not cause any undue dryness of the atmosphere, a fact sufficiently evidenced by the flourishing condition of a large specimen maiden-hair fern I kept for several winters in perfect colour and active growth ; but

Difficulties of a Town Gardener

where a house has a cement or tile floor, and is in a dry and sunny situation, they may give trouble on this account, and require a pan of evaporating water to be kept on one or both of the end pillars. In the merry month of May—generally merry with a great deal of east wind in these parts—we packed up the stove and put it away, all nice and clean and dry, in the lumber room, whence it emerged, refreshed and industrious, with the first frost of the succeeding winter. A minor difficulty, and one which I daresay but few people have to encounter, is the difficulty of the dog. In my case the unit was and is considerably multiplied—sometimes by seven—and seven little Schipperkes can do more to break a gardener's heart than seven less active little dogs of almost any other breed. If you harbour a belief that no dogs are entirely made of wire, working watch-springs, india-rubber, and the secret of perpetual motion, I would suggest your starting a few of this breed, when the reality of the combination will become apparent. Our soil in summer is, if undisturbed, a good deal harder than brick, yet the result of two hours' work, undertaken during my temporary absence on a certain occasion

A Garden in the Suburbs

by a couple of pups of very tender age, was an excavation eighteen inches wide, about a foot deep, and almost completely encircling the trunk of the largest apple tree, a veteran who looks at least fifty years old. Multiply this pleasing denominator by the complete number of dogs, doubling it in the case of adults, possessed of greater scraping power, and you have devastation: there is only one cure. In the Oblong this takes the form of as imperceptible a fence and gate of netting and iron wire as can be contrived, whereby illegal access is denied to the injudiciously industrious, and only personally-conducted excursions are permitted. There is, however, one exception to the rule, and a living proof that it is possible for a little dog in its devotion to human interests to show the tenderest regard for what must seem to it the foolish preferences of its owner for evil-smelling flowers and uninterestingly neat borders over the unearthing of the field-mouse, the piquant pursuit of the buried bone, and the unwearied chase on the most ancient of cat-trails.

XVIII

THE OBLONG ASLEEP

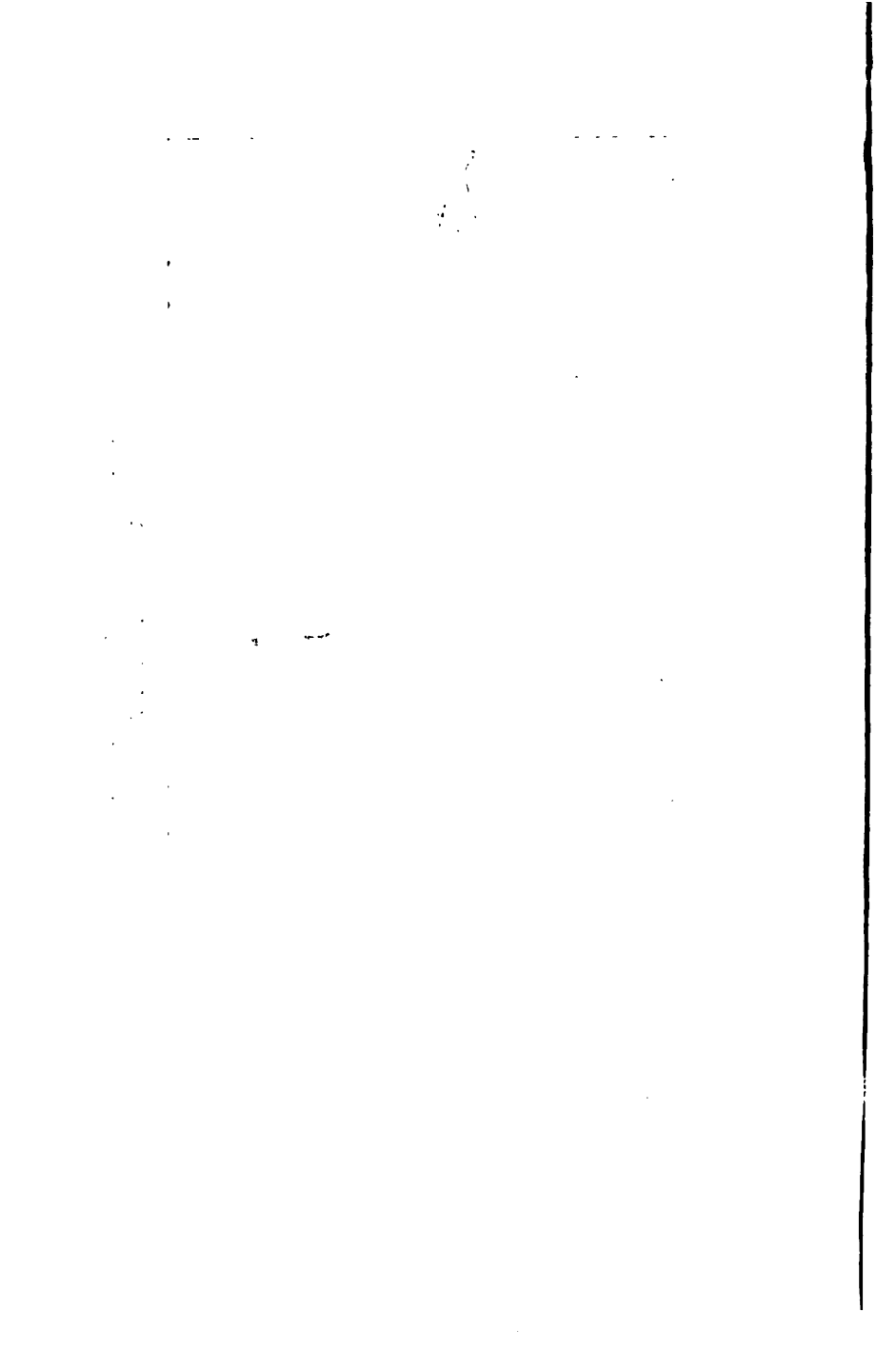
THE most trying time for the garden and the gardener alike, in this part of the world, is perhaps included between December the 1st and February 28th or 29th. Hard winters are out of fashion now, and for years past we have had weather after the same pattern during this part of the year. December muggy, warmish, and prodigal of heavy long-continued rain; January ushered in by floods, more or less, out of which the oblong is happily secured by its lofty situation on a hillside, but whose influence, in cold fogs and rising damps, it feels. We but seldom see the sun through these two months, and in the greenhouse mildew is viciously active. Every day it is necessary to go round and pick off all the damping leaves from the pot-violets, which are full of buds, but holding them steadily in reserve, and from the two or three chrysanthemums which give the house its only bit of colour up to Christ-

A Garden in the Suburbs

mas. Presently the crocuses in pans will be out ; some of them, notably *C. Imperati*, are all ready to expand, but are waiting for a gleam of sunshine to tempt them. On the whole, the experiment of using no heat at all is so far successful ; these tiny houses are so seldom satisfactory when heated, and the trouble it gives to attend a lamp—although I found my Rippingille's Radiating stove as perfectly satisfactory as any apparatus inside a house could be—is not repaid by the advantage of keeping a few plants which could be bought afresh in the spring for half the cost of the oil used. It would be different did the Oblong call for bedding out plants ; but it is now so crammed with perennials that if I find room next summer for a few of my favourite beauties of a season it will be a marvel. In February our usual lot is a week or so of fine warm days, dear foretastes of summer, which tempt out the crocuses and a few silly things that never learn better, and are battered and ruined by the bitter wind, hail, and probably snow, which generally follow hard on the heels of the soft spell, and carry the winter off in true Arctic wise. These duresses, and the March and April east winds, do much harm coming after a long season of dul-



AN UGLY CORNER
WITH THE BEGINNING OF BETTER THINGS



The Oblong Asleep

ness and damp, and some plants usually succumb, hence possibilities of finding space for a few annuals tempt me to buy and sow seeds. One must do this, too, for the pleasure of it, and even if I raise a whole pan of ten-week stocks, and give away all but three of the plantlets, I own the delight of rearing them sturdily to the good. This year I am sowing stocks, dwarf lobelia—always so accommodating and ready to occupy little unthought of corners—the same lovely single asters I had last year, Sutton's great pink, white, mauve and purple beauties, that with their gay yellow centres won so many eyes, and some annual larkspurs of the dwarfer race. I saw these latter in a neighbour's garden and coveted them for their compactness, their long season of bloom, the great amount of that bloom as compared with their neat unobtrusive foliage, and, by no means least, their very delicious colour. There is a pink, and a lilac, that are pure joys. Then comes the usual mental conflict about Sweet Peas. Every year they are a failure, more or less, for they do not like this garden, and every year I decide to have no more, yet each season finds me sowing them and trying new dodges to get them to succeed. I

A Garden in the Suburbs

fancy it is the fear of seeing them elsewhere and having none at all at home, that eventually masters my resolution to have no more to do with the obstinate lovely things. It is the yearly recurring drought of July and August that they resent : we plant them in a well-dug spot, in fresh rich soil, with a reserve of cow-manure buried for them to draw upon ; yet in spite of careful watering, they turn wiry and of a sour yellow-green as soon as the air becomes thoroughly dry. I suppose they exact atmospheric moisture, and that no efforts can provide for them in such parching times as visited the Oblong last summer. I have had some roses from France just lately, and on the whole am pleased with them. The prices, set forth in a little unassuming brochure of a catalogue issued by London agents, were absurdly small—monthlies from 2s. a dozen, and the newest show hybrid teas at 1s. 4d. each. I more than half expected the roses to be worthless, but although they are small, and an English grower would most probably keep them another season before selling them for a much higher price, they are thrifty little things with an astonishing amount of fibrous root, and I am not at all sure that in the long run they will not outstrip

The Oblong Asleep

bushes twice their age, but transplanted at the same time, on account of their much larger proportion of root to top. One drawback was their late arrival, for although, by good luck, the ground just happened to be in fair order for planting when they came, in the last week of December, one could not expect to repeat such good fortune, and they might very well have arrived in the midst of a fortnight's heavy rain, or, further north, of frost or snow, making it impossible to put them in their permanent quarter. The long journey dried them but little; all the same, we gave them the best start we knew of, by soaking their roots in (soft) water for a few hours before planting. Recommendations to avoid leaving rose and other bushes about, with roots drying or parching or bitten by an eager wind, are among the most common of the useful bits of advice the papers give us: yet I, for one, have never seen an amateur so regardless of the comfort of plants in this respect as some of the professional gardeners I know.

Our little new apple tree—Cox's Orange Pippin, sweetest, mellowest, and prettiest of eating fruit of its kind—is in situ, neatly staked, and planted a few feet

A Garden in the Suburbs

away from the stump of the effete oldster it has replaced. Good store of kindling and eke of the prettiest mossy logs, neatly cut, did the veteran provide for the wood-cellar, and there could not be a more charming log for the Christmas fire than one cut from an apple tree, useful and ornamental to the last. The stump has been left about six feet high, and is to serve for a supporting pillar to two roses—Reine Olga de Wurtemberg and Grüss an Teplitz; but as it will be necessary to dig largely and give them a full load of fresh soil to root in, and the task is large for Adam's liking, it has been awhile postponed until January leisure shall enable him to take it in scant daily portions. The climbers will be put in out of pots in the spring, a plan which, if the necessary watering is well attended to, usually succeeds fairly well.

In my little rock garden, with its two lily tubs, everything is fast asleep except the gold-fish, who, shooting out their tube-like mouths, are among the most immutable of nature's objects. They get plenty of worms, though how or why the foolish things tumble into the water is inscrutable. The edges of the tubs are not flush with the surface of the soil, but rise two inches

The Oblong Asleep

or so, and are massed by stones and clumps of saxifrage, so that the only reason for the worms' presence within the fishes' reach must be deliberate suicide. Sometimes a fish is seen in the morning with three or four inches of fat worm protruding from his tube mouth, and in the evening it is not quite all gone. Slugs none of the fish will look at, so if these unpleasant creatures fall in, as is occasionally the case, they have to be removed. *Nymphæa Laydekeri rosea* lost all its leaves in October, and has quite disappeared, whereas *Helveola* in the other tub is bravely holding on to its foliage.

XIX

SOME ROSES—AND AN END

Roses in little gardens are often in some degree the cause of trouble. We all want to have them, and where there is only room for a very few the difficulty of choice is great, while indulgence in a few leads to the inclusion of more and more until they are subjected to what roses above all things dislike—crowding. Catalogues give such glowing descriptions of every rose they offer, that all appear equally desirable, whereas there are many of the hybrid perpetuals and teas which are practically useless to the gardener in a small way. My own experience is strongly in favour of keeping almost entirely to the hybrid teas for such gardens as this, where thirty or forty roses at most can find room to be happy. The H. T.'s are very floriferous, and for the most part very easy to grow, and they are also easy to manage as regards pruning—the golden rule being to cut away thin, weak, old wood in late March, and leave the lusty young shoots to grow

Some Roses—and an End

as they will. I have a long narrow bed devoted to roses, in which seven climbers are grown up poles, and about a dozen and a half bush-roses are planted in front of them, with some of the little bush polyanthas in the front. Then I have a large bed of the lovely old and new China roses, which are most accommodating in respect of soil and situation, though they *like* a warm place: the old Gloire de Dijon; a red Bourbon, name unknown; Reine Marie Henriette, yellow Banksian, and the white and yellow and pink Ramblers, Thalia, Euphrosyne and Aglaia, on the walls; bushes of the lovely white Rugosas, Blanche double de Coubert and Mme. Georges Bruant, in the borders, with the pink Delicata, while Crimson Rambler, Andersoni, and Macrantha ornament arches, and Reine Olga de Wurtemberg a stump. Fortune's Yellow occupies the wall in the greenhouse. This is a fairly representative selection, I think, and gives an idea of rose beauty as far as is possible in a small space. As for the hybrid teas, hybrid perpetuals, chinas bush and polyanthas, those which should in my experience be first included in all collections, however small, are to be chosen from the following:—

A Garden in the Suburbs

Chinas (bush)—

Cramoisie superieur crimson.
Hermosa, Laurette Messimy.
Mme. Eugène Resal, Fellemborg.
Queen Mab.

Hybrid teas (bush)—

Belle Siebrecht (Mrs W. J. Grant, synonym).
Lady Mary Fitzwilliam.
Duchess of Albany.
Ma Tulipe.
La France.
Augustine Guinoisseau (white La France).
Viscountess Folkstone.
Kaiserin Augusta Victoria.
L'Innocence.
Caroline Testout, Killarney.
Grossherzogin Victoria Melita.
Mme. Jules Grolez.
Souvenir du Président Carnot.

Hybrid Perpetuals (easy to grow)—

Captain Christy, Duke of Edinburgh.
Gen. Jacqueminot, Mme. Isaac Pereire.
Margaret Dickson.
Mrs John Laing.
Mrs Sharman Crawford (specially good).

Teas (bush)—

Beauté Inconstante (unique colour).
Francisca Krüger.
Mme. Hoste, Mrs Edward Mawley.
Maman Cochet, Bessie Brown.
Papa Gontier, Sunrise.
Souvenir de S. A. Prince.

Some Roses—and an End

White Maman Cochet.

Climbers or Pillar roses, other than those already mentioned—

Climbing Belle Siebrecht (Mrs W. J. Grant).

Bardou Job.

Climbing Devoniensis.

Gloire de Dijon.

William Allen Richardson.

Rêve d'Or.

Grüss an Teplitz.

I do not in the least claim that these are the ideal collection in any other light than that of my own experience or personal predilection, but I am very sure that he or she who can grow them all well will have a true rose feast. As for the little polyantha bushes a selection of

Mosella.

Gloire des Polyanthes.

Mignonette

Paquerette.

Red Pet.

Perle des Rouges.

Petit Constant.

Lawrencia rubra.

will provide them in variety and show their charm to perfection.

Most amateurs have an idea that manure is the chief necessity for roses,

A Garden in the Suburbs

and they wonder that old black garden soil, heavily manured, will not grow them well. A wheelbarrow-load of good fresh, yellow, turfy loam, mixed with a sprinkling of bone meal to each bush or climber, is what I am inclined to prescribe as the elixir to enable everybody to grow roses; they will then thankfully receive manure later on. The difficulty in this matter lies in the great scarcity of really good loam, loam which feels solid and greasy in the hand and breaks in generous lumps; but there is no such word as "impossible" for the real enthusiast. To him, or even more to her, *Michauxia Campanuloides*, *Incarvillea Delavayi*, the lordly *Lilium giganteum*, *Gerbera Jamesoni*, the noble spikes of the *Eremuri*, and the gay inconsistencies and inexplicable prejudices of Cape bulbs and the lesser and rarer daffodils, not to speak of *Colchicums*, Lilies in general, some Alpines, and all the rest of the plants which have reputations for being difficult to manage, merely offer extra inducement in the satisfaction which will be the reward of success. So, too, the difficulties which restricted areas present to the gardener are only a spur to the hope that on that blissful "someday," which for most of us holds so much more

Some Roses—and an End

than is possible in the present, garden boundaries may widen and garden opportunities increase. And even when the dream never comes true, and the garden is always but a little one, how joyful it is to have a garden at all!

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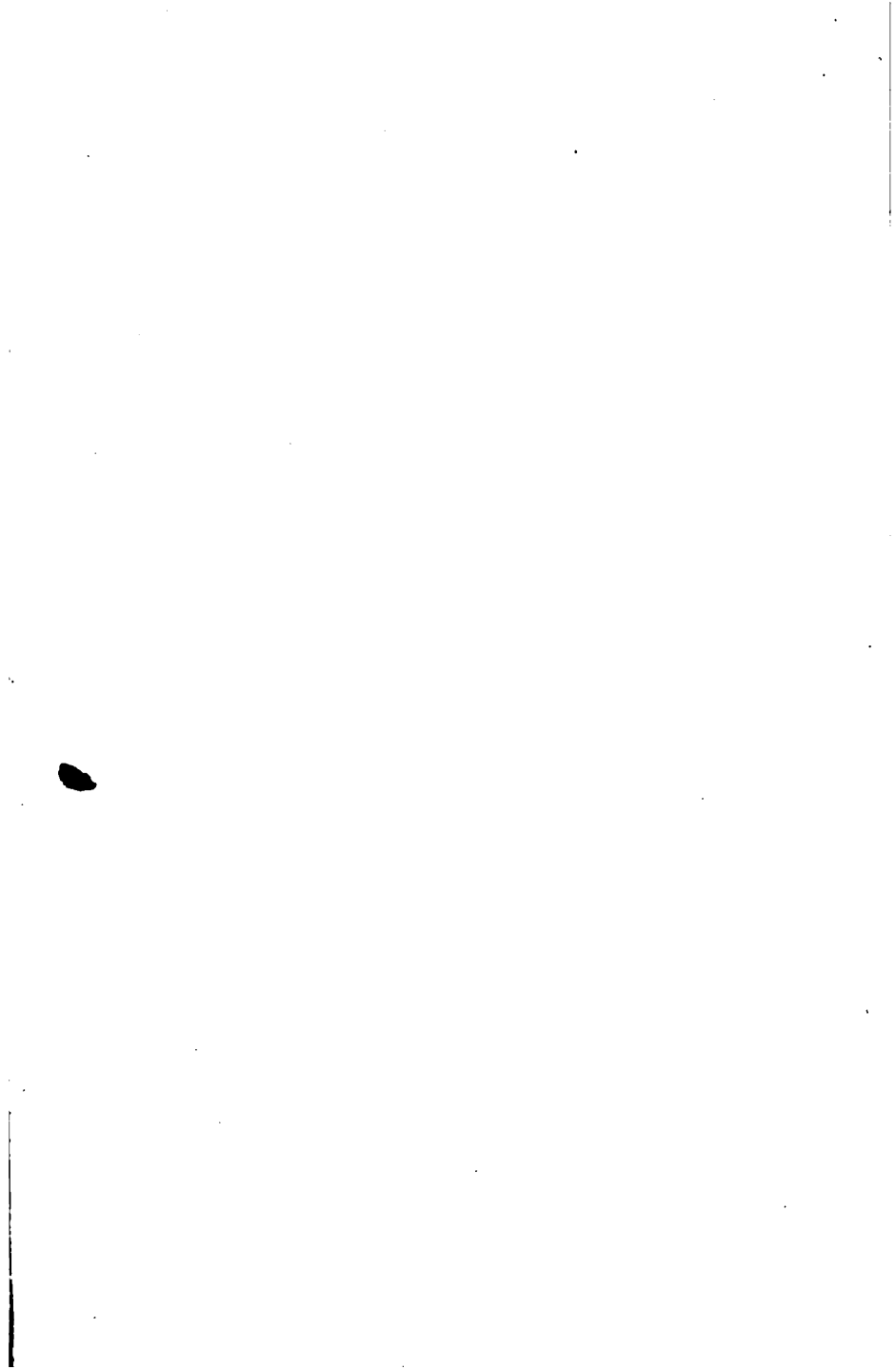
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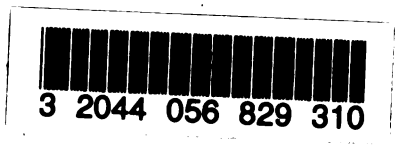
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